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Vinla

B.A. (Sb)

poetry is the criticism of life
philosophy is poetry at must
give a glimpse of truth

"Intelligence" is the general
ability to handle a moral situation
successfully.

It is the use of the application
of the intellect.

Vinla

For

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To
S. P. Chand.
Guru Nanak Engineering
College.

Ludhiana

Punjab.

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GOLDEN HARVEST

by

C. MAHAJAN, M. A.,
PRINCIPAL, ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, AGRA.

1952

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INTRODUCTION

"Poetry's unnat'ral" observed Mr. Weller, Senior. Perhaps, he was right in his protest; for isn't the expression "All day" more lucid and concise than "From the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings"? Such a round about mode of expression certainly seems inconsistent with and unsuitable for the ordinary work-a-day world where time presses. But while the two phrases embody much the same idea, the latter is the product of an entirely different attitude to life, conveying a special thought and ushering us at once in a new world. It was born of a mood of passionate longing that was aroused in the poet's breast as he lived the life of an exile in a London Street and thought of his distant home and imagined how differently the day would be spent there.

It is, therefore, worthwhile to remember that poetry is not a mere cult of abnormal men; it is very natural to man. When life is a rhythm, every motion is an untaught metre: and if life is great, there is no end to great poetry. Poetry is the "resonance of the greatness of soul". At every great hour of life—hours of exalted happiness or passionate sorrow—if a man does not feel inarticulate as though he had never learned to speak, his deepest emotions will breathe fine Poetry.

The poet tries to expand the life of man. He wants to make it more full and real. Life interests and excites him, but he does not copy it as the historian does. Poetry is not worthwhile if it is a mere imitation of life. It is rather 'a criticism of life'. The Poet sees into the life of things. He has a keener sensibility to interpret 'a creation groaning and travailing' after its proper meaning. "Our imaginations," says W. B. Yeats, "are but fragments of the universal imagination and as we enlarge our imagination by imaginative sympathy, and

transform, with the beauty and peace of art, the sorrow and joys of the world, we put off the limited mortal man more and more and put on the unlimited 'immortal man'. Where there is no imagination, life is not full. When Christ said that all men were His brothers, He taught us to look into life more imaginatively. Shelley, also, defined poetry as the "expression of imagination", and defended it against the tyranny of reason—

Bright reason will mock thee
Like the Sun from a wintry sky.

Reason is to Shelley the 'Sun from a wintry sky', but then there are Poets of Reason who refuse to be forgotten, and in spite of all derision, they have made a place for themselves in poetry. Wit and wisdom, no less than desire and inspiration, seem to turn naturally to the poetic pattern of Pope and Dryden. Their poetry is not written in a state of 'exalted enthusiasm' and 'fine frenzy'. It is composed under the necessity of order, rule and sobriety. It is therefore imperative that the reader should be able to appreciate the nice balance between form and substance, wild emotion and controlling law, that makes the highest and noblest poetry.

"What can poetry do for us! What useful purpose is served by reading a medley of poems of all kinds and all ages? Why is there no end to the making of anthologies? Isn't a newspaper account of a football cup or the Test cricket a far more splendid epic to be devoured with utmost eagerness than all Milton's purplest patches which bore us unspeakably?" These are very natural questions which, after all, a young reader might ask. The only answer that can be given is that poetry is not a means to anything. It is one of the simple goods of life and no more needs to be vindicated than the contemplation of a sunset or the intercourse of friends. Laughter and tears, adventure and romance, thoughts of life and death—all this is the stuff that makes up life.

INTRODUCTION

v

The poet with his gifts of rare insight and noble expression brings these riches to our door. Of all the earthly possession of any race, poetry is the greatest possession: —

Trust to good verses, then ;
They only will aspire,
When Pyramids as men
Are lost i'th' funeral fire.

COMPILER

[illegible]

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

1. To His Love. *his love*

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead, and lovely knights ;

description
Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have exprest
Ev'n such a beauty as you master now.

So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all your prefiguring ; 10
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing ;

ability
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder but lack tongues to praise.

2. O Mistress Mine.

O Mistress mine, where are you roaming ?
O stay and hear : you true-love's coming,
That can sing both high and low ;
Trip no further, pretty sweetening,
Journeys end in lovers meeting—
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love ? 'tis not hereafter ;
Present mirth hath present laughter
What's to come is still unsure ;
In delay there lies no plenty,— 10
Then come kiss me, Sweet-and-twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

*postponement will certainly not bring
any additional pleasure Therefore come
to your beloved - youth*

3. Fear no more the Heat o' the Sun.

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
 Nor the furious winter's rages ;
 Thou thy worldly task hast done,
 Home art gone and tak'n thy wages :
 Golden lads and girls all must,
 As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the ^{anger} frown o' the great,
 Thou art past the tyrant's stroke ;
 Care no more to clothe and eat ;
 To thee the reed is as the oak ;
 The sceptre, learning, physic, must
 All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash
 Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone ;
 Fear not slander, censure rash ;
 Thou hast finish'd joy and moan :
 All lovers young, all lovers must,
 Consign to thee, and come to dust.

JOHN MILTON

4. Invocation to Urania.

Descend from Heav'n Urania, by that name
 If rightly thou art call'd, whose voice divine
 Following, above th' Olympian hill I soar,
 Above the flight of Pegasean wing.
 The meaning, not the name I call : for thou
 Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
 Of old Olympus dwell'st but heav'nly born,
 Before the hills appeared, or fountain flow'd,
 Thou with eternal wisdom didst converse,
 Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
 In presence of th' Almighty Father, pleas'd

With thy celestial song. Up led by thee
 Into the heav'n I have presum'd,
 An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
 Thy tempering ; with like safety guided down
 Return me to my native element :
 Lest from this flying steed unrein'd (as once
 Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
 Dismounted on th' Aleian field I fall
 Erroneous, there to wander and forlorn. 20
 Half yet remains unsung but narrower bound
 Within the visible diurnal sphere ;
 Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
 More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchang'd
 To hoarse or mute, (though fallen on evil days.
 On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues ;
 In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
 And solitude ; yet not alone, while thou
 Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
 Purples the east : still govern thou my song, 30
 Urania, and fit audience find, thou few.
 But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
 Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
 Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
 In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
 To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
 Both harp and voice ; nor could the Muse defend
 Her son. So fail not thou who thee implores :
 For thou art heav'nly, she an empty dream.

5. On His Blindness.

When I consider how my light is spent
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one talent which is death to hide,
 Lodged with me useless ; though my soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest He returning chide,—
 Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ?
 I fondly ask :—But patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies : God doth not need

Either man's work, or his own gifts : who best 10
 Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best : His state
 Is kingly ; thousands at his bidding speed
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest :—
 They also serve who only stand and wait.

6. On His Twenty-third Birthday.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
 Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year :
 My hasting days fly on with full career,
 But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th. Shows
 Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
 That I to manhood am arriv'd so near,
 And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
 That some more, timely happy spirits endu'th. 10
 Yet be it less or more or soon or slow,
 I shall be still in strictest measure even, 10
 To that same lot, however mean, or high,
 Toward which Time leads me, and the will of
 Heav'n :

All is, if I have grace to use it so,
 As ever in my great Task-Master's eye,
 JOHN DRYDEN, I shall live in
 his service.

7. Alexander's Feast, or, the Power of Music.

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
 By Philip's warlike son—
 A loft in awful state
 The godlike hero sate
 On his imperial throne ;
 His valiant peers were placed around :
 Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound
 (So should desert in arms be crown'd) ;
 The lovely Thais by his side Comlady (mistress)
 Sate like a blooming eastern bride 10

jove — King of all gods

JOHN DRYDEN

5

In flower of youth and beauty's pride :—

Happy, happy, happy pair !

None but the brave

None but the brave

None but the brave deserves the fair !

Timotheus, placed on high

Amid the tuneful quire,

With flying fingers touch'd the lyre ;

The trembling notes ascend the sky

And heavenly joys inspire.

The song began from Jove

Who left his blissful seats above—

Such is the power of mighty love !

A dragon's fiery form belied the god,

Sublime on radiant spires he rode

When he to fair Olympia prest,

And while he sought her snowy breast,

Then round her slender waist he curl'd,

And stamp'd an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.

—The listening crowd admire the lofty sound :

A present deity ! they shout around :

A present deity ! the vaulted roofs rebound :

With ravish'd ears

The monarch hears,

Assumes the god,

Affects to nod,

And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,

Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young :

The jolly god in triumph comes !

Sound the trumpets, beat the drums !

Flush'd with a purple grace

He shows his honest face :

Now give the hautboys breath ; he comes, he comes !

Bacchus ever fair and young.

Drinking joys did first ordain ;

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,

Drinking is the soldier's pleasure :

Rich the Treasure,
 Sweet the pleasure,
 Sweet is pleasure after pain.
 Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain ;
 Fought all his battles o'er again,
 And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew
 the slain.

50

The master saw the madness rise,
 His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes ;
 And while he Heaven and Earth defied
 Changed his hand and check'd his pride,
 He chose a mournful Muse
 Soft pity to infuse :
 He sung Darius great and good,
 By too severe a fate
 Fallen, fallen. fallen, fallen,
 Fallen from his high estate,
 And weltering in his blood :
 Deserted, at his utmost need,
 By those his former bounty fed ;
 On the bare earth exposed he lies
 With not a friend to close his eyes.

60

8. The False Achitophel.

Of these the false Achitophel was first,
 A name to all succeeding ages cursed.
 For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
 Sagacious ; bold, and turbulent of wit,
 Restless, unfixed in principles and place,
 In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace ;
 A fiery soul, which working out its way,
 Fretted the pigmy body to decay :
 And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.
 A daring pilot in extremity,
 Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high
 He sought the storms ; but, for a calm unfit,
 Would steer to nigh the sands to boast his wit.

10

Great wits are sure to madness near allied
 And thin partitions do their bounds divide ;
 Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
 Refuse his age the needful hours of rest ?
 Punish a body which he could not please,
 Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease ?
 And all to leave what with his toil he won 20
 To that unfeather'd two legg'd thing, a son :
 Got, while his soul did huddled notions try ;
 And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
 In friendship false, implacable in hate,
 Resolv'd to ruin or to rule the state ;
 To compass this the triple bond he broke ;
 The pillars of the public safety shook,
 And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke ;
 Then, seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
 Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name. 30
 So easy still it proves in factious times *troubled times*
 With public zeal to cancel private crimes.
 How safe is treason and how sacred ill,
 Where none can sin against the people's will, *require*
 Where crowds can wink, and no offence be known,
 Since in another's guilt they find their own !
 Yet fame deserv'd, no enemy can grudge :
 The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge. *hate*
 In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abbethdin *judge*
 With more discerning eyes or hands more clean. 40
 Unbrib'd, unsought ; the wretched to redress, *was judge*
 Swift of dispatch and easy of access. *Courteous*
 Oh, had he been content to serve the crown
 With virtues only proper to the gown,
 Or had the rankness of the soil been freed *soften'd*
 From cockle, that oppressed the noble seed,
 David for him his tuneful harp had strung.
 And Heav'n had wanted one immortal song. ✓

ALEXANDER POPE

9. Human Folly.

Whate'er the passion, knowledge, fame, or pelf,
 Not one will change his neighbour with himself.
 The learn'd is happy Nature to explore,
 The fool is happy that he knows no more;
 The rich is happy in the plenty given,
 The poor contents him with the care of Heaven.
 See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,
 The sot a hero, lunatic a king;
 The starving chemist in his golden views
 Supremely blest, the poet in his Muse,
 See some strange comfort every state attend,
 And pride bestow'd on all, a common friend:
 See some fit passion every age supply,
 Hope travels through, nor quits us when we die.
 Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,
 Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw;
 Some lovelier plaything gives his youth delight,
 A little louder, but as empty quite:
 Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
 And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age:
 Pleased with this bauble still, as that before;
 Till tired he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.

10. Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady.

What beck'ning ghost, along the moon-light shade,
 Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?
 'Tis she!—but why that bleeding bosom gor'd,
 Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?
 Oh ever beauteous, ever friendly! tell,
 Is it, in heav'n, a crime to love too well,
 To bear too tender, or too firm a heart,
 To act a Lover's or a Roman's part?
 Is there no bright reversion in the sky,
 For those who greatly think, or bravely die?

Why bade ye else, ^{asked} ye Powers ! her soul aspire
 Above the vulgar flight of low desire ?
 Ambition first sprung from your ^{your gods} blest abodes ;
 The glorious fault of Angels and of Gods ;
 Thence to their images on earth it flows ;
 And in the breasts of Kings and Heroes glows ;
 Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age.
 Dull sullen pris'ners in the body's cage :
 Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years
 Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres ;
 Like Eastern Kings a lazy state they keep,
 And close confin'd to their own place, sleep.

20

From these perhaps (ere nature bade her die)
 Fate snatch'd her early to the pitying sky,
 As into air the purer spirits flow,
 And sep'rate from their kindred dregs below.
 So flew the soul to its congenial place,
 Nor left one virtue to redeem her Race,

But thou, false guardian of a charge too good,
 Thou, mean deserter of thy brother's blood !
 See on these ruby lips the trembling breath,
 These cheeks now fading at the blast of death :
 Cold is that breast which warm'd the world before,
 And those love-darting eyes must roll no more.
 Thus, if Eternal justice rules the ball,
 Thus shall your wives, and thus your children fall ;
 On all the line a sudden vengeance waits.
 And frequent hearses shall besiege your gates.
 There passengers shall stand, and pointing say
 (While the long fun'rals blacken all the way),
 Lo ! these were they, whose souls the Furies steel'd,
 And curs'd with hearts unknowing how to yield.
 Thus unlamented pass the proud away,
 The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day !
 So perish all whose breast ne'er learn'd to glow
 For other's good, or melt at other's woe.

30

40

What can atone (oh ever-injur'd shade !)
 Thy fate unpity'd, and thy rites unpaid ?
 No frien's complaint, no kind domestic tear
 Pleas'd thy pale ghost or grac'd thy mournful bier, 50

By foreign hands thy dying eyes were clos'd,
 By foreign hands thy decent limbs compos'd,
 By foreign hands thy humble grave adorn'd,
 By strangers honour'd and by strangers mourn'd !
 What tho' no friends in sable weeds appear,
 Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,
 And bear about the mockery of woe
 To midnight dances, and the public show ?
 What tho' no weeping Loves thy ashes grace,
 Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face ?
 What tho' no sacred earth allow thee room,
 Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb ?
 Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be drest,
 And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast ;
 There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
 There the first roses of the year shall blow ;
 While Angels with their silver wings o'ershade
 The ground, now sacred by thy reliques made.

60

So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,
 What once had beauty titles, wealth, and fame,
 How lov'd, how honour'd avails thee not,
 To whom related, or by whom begot ;
 A heap of dust alone remains of thee,
 'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be !

70

Poets themselves must fall, like those they sung,
 Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.
 Ev'n he, whose soul now melts in mournful lays,
 Shall shortly want the gen'rous tear he pays ;
 Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
 And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart,
 Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
 The Muse forgot, and thou be lov'd no more.

80

WILLIAM COWPER

11. The Castaway.

Obscurest night involved the sky,
 The Atlantic billows roared,

When such a destined wretch as I
 Washed headlong from on board,
 Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
 His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
 Then he with whom he went,
 Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
 With warmer wishes sent.
 He loved them both, but both in vain
 Nor him beheld, nor her again.

10

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
 Expert to swim, he lay ;
 Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
 Or courage die away ;
 But waged with death a lasting strife,
 Supported by despair of life.

He shouted ; nor his friend had failed
 To check the vessel's course,
 But so the furious blast prevailed,
 That pitiless perforce,
 They left their outcast mate behind,
 And scudded still before the wind.

20

Some succour yet they could afford ;
 And such as storms allow,
 The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
 Delayed not to bestow.
 But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
 Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

30

Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he
 Their haste himself condemn,
 Aware that flight, in such a sea,
 Alone could rescue them ;
 Yet bitter felt it still to die
 Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
 In ocean, self-upheld ;
 And so long he, with unspent power,
 His destiny repelled ;
 And ever, as the minutes flew,
 Entreated help or cried 'Adieu !'

40

At length, his transient respite past,
 His comrades, who before
 Had heard his voice in every blast,
 Could catch the sound no more ;
 For then, by toil subdued, he drank
 The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him ; but the page
 Of narrative sincere,
 That tells his name, his worth, his age,
 Is wet with Anson's tear ;
 And tears by bards or heroes shed
 Alike immortalize the dead.

50

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
 Decanting on his fate,
 To give the melancholy theme
 A more enduring date :
 But misery still delights to trace
 Its semblance in another's case.

60

No voice divine the storm allayed,
 No light propitious shone,
 When snatched from all effectual aid,
 We perished, each alone :
 But I beneath in a rougher sea,
 And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.

12. God made the Country.

God made the country and man made the town,
 What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts

That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
 That life holds out to all, should most abound
 And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves ?
 Possess ye, therefore ye, who borne about
 In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
 But that of Idleness, and taste no scenes
 But such as art contrives, possess ye still
 Your element ; there only can ye shine,
 There only minds like yours can do no harm,
 Our groves were planted to console at noon
 The pensive wand'rer in their shades : At eve
 The moon-beam sliding softly in between
 The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
 Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
 The splendour of your lamps ; they but eclipse
 Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
 Our more harmonious notes : the thrush departs
 Scar'd : and th' offended nightingale is mute,
 There is a public mischief in your mirth ;
 It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,
 Grac'd with a sword ; and worthier of a fan,
 Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
 Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
 A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

10

20

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

13. Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey.

Five years have pass'd ; five summers, with the length
 Of five long winters ! and again I hear
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
 With a soft inland murmur—Once again
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, *poets*
 That on a wild secluded scene impress *lonely*
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect *loneliness*
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose *take rest*
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view

10

a fruit tree

These plots of cottage ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
There hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild ; these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door ; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees !
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

20

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye ;
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration ;—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the very life of things.

30

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If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh, how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight : when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye ! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee !
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought, 60
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again :
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills ; when like a roe 70
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led : more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood, 80
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite ; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye—That time is past
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Nor for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur ; other gifts
Have followed ; for such loss. I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned 90

To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thought less youth ; but hearing often times
 The still, sad music of humanity,
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
 To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
 A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 And mountains ; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
 Of eye and ear,—both what they half create.
 And what perceive ; well pleased to recognise
 In nature and the language of the sense,
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my mortal being.

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Nor perchance

If I were not thus taught should I the more
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay :
 For thou art with me here upon the banks
 Of this fair river ; thou my dearest Friend,
 My dear, dear Friend ; and in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once,
 My dear, dear Sister ! and this prayer I make,
 Knowing that Nature never did betray,
 The heart that loved her : 'tis her privilege,
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy : for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed

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With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee and in after years, 140
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure ; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place .
For all sweet sounds and harmonies ; oh then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations ! Nor perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear 150
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together ; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service : rather say
With warmer love—with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs, 160
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake !

14. Michael.

A Pastoral Poem

If from the public way you turn your steps
 Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
 You will suppose that with an upright path,
 Your feet must struggle ; in such bold ascent
 The pastoral mountains front you, face to face,
 But, courage ! for around that boisterous brook
 The mountains have all opened out themselves,
 And made a hidden valley of their own,
 No habitation can be seen ; but they
 Who journey thither find themselves alone
 With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
 That overhead are sailing in the sky.
 It is in truth an utter solitude ;
 Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
 But for one object which you might pass by,
 Might see and notice. Beside the brook
 Appears a struggling heap of unhewn stones !
 And to that simple object appertains
 A story—unenriched with strange events,
 Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
 Or for the summer shade. It was the first
 Of those domestic tales that spake to me
 Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
 Whom I already loved ;—not verily
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
 Where was their occupation and abode.
 And hence this Tale, while I was yet a boy,
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency
 Of natural objects, led me on to feel
 For passions that were not my own, and think
 (At random and imperfectly indeed)
 On man, the heart of man, and human life.
 Therefore, although it be a history
 Homely and rude, I will relate the same
 For the delight of a few natural hearts ;

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And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale 40
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name ;
And old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength : his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone ; and often times,
When others heeded not, he heard the South 50
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me !" .
And, truly, at all times, the storm that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains : he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights ; 60
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts,
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air ; hills which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed ; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;
Which, like a book, preserved that memory 70
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainly of honourable gain ;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less had laid

Strong hold on his affections, were to him
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
 The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
 His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
 Though younger than himself full twenty years,
 She was a woman of a stirring life,
 Whose heart was in her house ; two wheels she had
 Of antique form ; this large, for spinning wool ;
 That small, for flax : and, if one wheel had rest,
 It was because the other was at work.

80

The Pair had but one inmate in their house
 An only Child, who had been born to them
 When Michael telling o'er his years, began
 To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
 With one foot in the grave. This only son,
 With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
 The one of an inestimable worth,

90

Made all their household. I may truly say,
 That they were as a proverb in the vale
 For endless industry. When day was gone
 And from their occupations out of doors
 The Son and Father were come home, even then,
 Their labour did not cease ; unless when all
 Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
 Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
 And his old Father both betook themselves
 To such convenient work as might employ
 Their hands by the fireside ; perhaps to card
 Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.

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Down from the ceiling by the chimney's edge,
 That in our ancient uncouth country style
 With huge and black projection over-browed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light

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Of day grew dim the housewife hung a lamp ;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours.
Which going by from year to year, had found,
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps 120
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer-flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life 130
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake ;
And from this constant light, so regular,
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years, 140
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail, 150
Exceeding was the love he bore to him,
His heart and his heart's joy ! For often times

Old Michael, when he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love, 160
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearers, covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
THE CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.
There while they two were sitting in the shade, 170
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut 180
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy, wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called.
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe, 190

Receiving from his Father hire of praise ;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions ; why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now ? that from the Boy there came 200
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind ;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again ?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up ;
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound 210
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means ;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him ; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost. 220
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve ; he thought again,
And his heart failed him, "Isabel," said he
Two evenings after he had heard the news,

"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
 And in the open sunshine of God's love
 Have we all lived; yet, if these fields of ours
 Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
 That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
 Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
 Has scarcely been more diligent than I
 And I have lived to be a fool at last
 To my own family. An evil man

230

That was, and made an evil choice, if he
 Were false to us; and, if he were not false,
 There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
 Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but
 'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
 When I began, my purpose was to speak
 Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.

240

Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
 Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
 He shall possess it, free as is the wind
 That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
 Another kinsman—he will be our friend
 In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
 Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
 And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
 He quickly will repair this loss, and then
 He may return to us. If here he stay,
 What can be done? Where every one is poor,
 What can be gained?"

250

At this the old Man paused

And Isabel sat silent for her mind
 Was busy, looking back into past times.
 There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
 He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
 They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
 And half-pennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
 A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
 And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
 Went up to London, found a master there,
 Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
 To go and overlook his merchandise

260

Beyond the seas ; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands . 270
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed : "Well Isabel ! this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet,
We have enough —I wish indeed that I
Were younger ;—but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth 280
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night :
If he could go, the Boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work : for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights, 290
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep :
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go :
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice ;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears, 300
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work ;
 And all the ensuing week the house appeared
 As cheerful as a grove in Spring : at length
 The expected letter from their kinsman came
 Wind kind assurances that he would do
 His utmost for the welfare of the Boy ;
 To which, requests were added, that forthwith 310
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
 The letter was read over ; Isabel
 Went forth to show it to the neighbours round :
 Nor was there at that time on English land
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
 Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
 "He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
 The Housewife answered, talking much of things
 Which, if at such short notice he should go,
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length 320
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
 In that deep valley, Michael had designed
 To build a Sheepfold ; and before he heard
 The tidings of his melancholy loss.
 For this same purpose he had gathered up
 A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
 With Luke that evening thitherward he walked :
 And soon as they had reached the place he stopped, 330
 And thus the old Man spake to him :—"My Son,
 To-morrow thou wilt leave me : with full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories ; 't will do thee good
 When thou art from me, even if I should touch
 On things thou canst not know of—After thou
 First cam'st, into the world—as oft befalls 340
 To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away

Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune ;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed 350
And on the mountains ; else I think thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke : among these hills.
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart ; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak 360
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good father ; and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands ; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth ;
Both of them sleep together ; here they lived
As all their Forefathers had done : and, when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould. 370
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived.
But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burdened when they came to me ;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled ; God blessed me in my work
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke. 380

If judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go." At this the old Man paused ;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood.
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed :

"This was a work for us ; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands,
Nay, Boy, be of good hope ;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale ;—do thou thy part ; 390
I will do mine—I will begin again

With many tasks that were resigned to thee ;
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face—Heaven bless thee, Boy !
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes ; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke : thou hast been bound to me 400
Only by links of love : when thou art gone.
What will be left to us !—But I forget

My purpose. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested, and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son.
And of this moment : hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee : amid all fear
And all temptation. Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy fathers lived, 410
Who, being innocent, did for that cause

Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here : a covenant

'T will be between us ; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."
The Shepherd ended here : and Luke stooped down
And, as his father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight 420

The old Man's grief broke from him ; to his heart
 He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept ;
 And to the house together they returned.
 — Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
 Ere the night fell :—with morrow's dawn the Boy
 Began his journey, and, when he had reached
 The public way, he put on a bold face ;
 And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
 Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
 That followed him till he was out of sight.

430

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
 Of Luke and his well-doing ; and the Boy
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
 Which as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
 "The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
 Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
 So many months passed on : and once again
 The shepherd went about his daily work
 With confident and cheerful thoughts ; and now
 Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
 He to that valley took his way, and there
 Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
 To slacken in his duty ; and, at length,
 He in the dissolute city gave himself
 To evil courses : ignominy and shame
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

440

There is a comfort in the strength of love ;
 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
 Would upset the brain, or break the heart :
 I have conversed with more than one who well
 Remembered the old Man, and what he was
 Years after he had heard this heavy news.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age,
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
 He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
 And listened to the wind ; and, as before,
 Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep.

450

And for the land, his small inheritance.
 And to that hollow dell from time to time 460
 Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
 His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
 The pity which was then in every heart
 For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
 That many and many a day he thither went,
 And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
 Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
 The length of full seven years, from time to time, 470
 He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died.
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her husband : at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
 The Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR
 Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the
 ground

On which it stood : great changes have been wrought
 In all the neighbourhood :—yet the Oak is left
 That grew beside their door, and the remains 480
 Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

15. Frost at Midnight.

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
 Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
 Came loud—and hark, again ! loud as before.
 The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
 Have left me to that solitude which suits
 Abstruser musings : save that at my side
 My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
 'Tis calm indeed ! so calm, that it disturbs

And vexes meditation with its strange
 And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
 This populous village ! Sea, and hill, and wood,
 With all the numberless goings-on of life,
 Inaudible as dreams ! the thin blue flame
 Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not ;
 Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
 Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
 Me thinks, its motion in this hush of nature
 Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
 Making it a companionable form,
 Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
 By its own moods interprets, every where
 Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
 And makes a toy of Thought.

10

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But O ! how oft,
 How oft, at school with most believing mind,
 Presageful, have I gazed upon the ears,
 To watch that fluttering *stranger* ! and as oft
 With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
 Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
 Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
 From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
 So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
 With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
 Most like articulate sounds of things to come !
 So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,
 Lulled me to sleep and sleep prolonged my dreams !
 And so I boded all the following morn
 Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
 Fixed with mock study on my swimming book :
 Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
 A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
 For still I hoped to see the *stranger's* face,
 Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
 My playmate when we both were clothed alike !
 Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
 Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
 Fill up the interspersed vacancies
 And momentary pauses of the thought !

30

40

My babe so beautiful ! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes ! For I was reared
In the great city, pent mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But *thou*, my babe ! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags ; so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in Himself.
Great universal Teacher ! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.
Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple tree, while the night thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whither the eave drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

50

60

70

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

16. Christabel.

PART THE FIRST

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock ;
Tu-whit ! — Tu-whoo !
And hark, again ! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock.
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour ; 10
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud ;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark ?
The night is chilly but not dark.
The thin grey cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full ;
And yet he looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is grey : 20
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate ?

1. This poem was begun almost immediately after the completion of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Its atmosphere is even more rarefied. The metre, the four-foot couplet, is common enough, but coleridge uses it with great variety and subtlety of effect.

She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight ;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

30

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And nought was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe :
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady Christabel !
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is, she cannot tell.
On the other side it seem to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

40

The night is chill : the forest bare ;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak ?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

50

Hush, beating heart of Christabel !
Jesus, Maria, shield her well !
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak,
What sees she there ?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone ;

60

The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck and arms were bare ;
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly !

“Mary mother, save me now !”
(Said Christabel) “And who art thou ?”

70

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet ;—
“Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness :
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear !”
‘Said Christabel, “How camest thou here ?”
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet :—

“My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine :
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn :
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white,

80

“The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white ;
And once we crossed the shade of night
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be ;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive,
Some muttered words his comrades spoke ;

90

He placed me underneath this oak,
He swore they would return with haste
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle-bell,
Stretch forth thy hand" (thus ended she),
"And help a wretched maid to flee."

100

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand
And comforted fair Geraldine :
"O well, bright dame ! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth and friends withal
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall."

110

She rose ! and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.

Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel :
"And our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell ;
Sir Leoline is weak in health
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night to share your couch with me."

120

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well :
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate ;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate ;

130

Then the lady rose again,
 And moved, as she were not in pain.
 So free from danger, free from fear,
 They crossed the court : right glad they were.
 And Christabel devoutly cried
 To the lady by her side,
 "Praise we the Virgin all divine
 Who hath rescued thee from thy distress !" 140
 "Alas, alas,!" said Geraldine,
 "I cannot speak for weariness."
 So free from danger, free from fear,
 They crossed the court : right glad they were.

Outside her kennel the mastiff old
 Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
 The mastiff old did not awake,
 Yet she an angry moan did make !
 And what can ail the mastiff bitch ?
 Never till now she uttered yell 150
 Beneath the eye of Christabel.
 Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch :
 For what can ail the mastiff bitch ?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
 Pass as lightly as you will !
 The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
 Amid their own white ashes lying ;
 But when the lady passed there came
 A tongue of light, a fit of flame ;
 And Christabel saw the lady's eye, 160
 And nothing else saw she thereby,
 Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall.
 Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall,
 "O softly tread," said Christabel,
 "My father seldom sleepeth well."

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
 And jealous of the listening air
 They steal their way from stair to stair,

Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath !
And now have reached her chamber door,
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

170

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet.
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet :
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

180

The silver lamp burns dead and dim :
But Christabel the lamp will trim
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

"O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine !
It is a wine of virtuous powers ;
My mother made it of wild flowers."

190

"And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn ?"
Christabel answered— "Woe is me !
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the grey-haired friar tell,
How on her death bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear ! that thou wert here !
"I would," said Geraldine, she were !

200

But soon with altered voice, said she—
 “Off wandering mother ! Peak and pine,
 I have power to bid thee flee,”
 Alas ! what ails poor Geraldine ?
 Why stares she with unsettled eye ?
 Can she the bodiless dead espy ?
 And why with hollow voice cries she,
 “Off, woman, off ! this hour is mine—
 Though thou her guardian spirit be,
 Off, woman, off ! ’tis given to me.”

210

Then Christabel knelt by the lady’s side,
 And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
 “Alas” said she, “this ghastly ride—
 Dear lady ! it hath wildered you !”
 The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
 And faintly said “ ’Tis over now !”
 Again the wild-flower wine she drank ;
 Her fair large eyes ’egan glitter bright,
 And from the floor whereon she sank,
 The lofty lady stood upright ;
 She was most beautiful to see
 Like a lady of a far countree.

220

The lofty lady stood upright ;
 And thus the lofty lady spake--
 “All they who live in the upper sky,
 Do love you, holy Christabel !
 And you love them, and for their sake
 And for the good which me befell,
 Even I in my degree will try,
 Fair maiden, to requite you well.
 But now unrobe yourself ; for I
 Must pray ere yet in bed I lie.”

230

Quoth Christabel, “So let it be !”
 And as the lady bade did she,
 Her gentle limbs did she undress,
 And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
 So many thoughts moved to and fro,
 That vain it were her lids to close;
 So half-way from the bed she rose,
 And on her elbow did recline
 To look at the lady Geraldine.

240

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
 And slowly rolled her eyes around;
 Then drawing in her breath aloud,
 Like one that shuddered, she unbound
 The cincture from beneath her breast;
 Her silken robe, and inner vest,
 Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
 Behold! her bosom and half her side—
 A sight to dream of, not to tell!
 O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!
 Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
 Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
 Deep from within she seems half-way
 To lift some weight with sick assay,
 And eyes the maid and seeks delay:
 Then suddenly as one defied
 Collects herself in scorn and pride,
 And lay down by the Maiden's side!—
 And in her arms the maid she took,

250

260

Ah wel-a-day!
 And with low voice and doleful look
 These words did say;
 "In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
 Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
 Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow, 270
 This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
 But vainly thou warrest,
 But this is alone in
 Thy power to declare,
 That in the dim forest
 Thou heard'st a low moaning,
 And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;

And didst bring her home with thee in love and in
charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

The Conclusion to Part the First

It was a lovely sight to see 280
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows ;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast ;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh call it fair not pale, 290
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me !)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame ! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree ?
And lo ! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms, 300
Seems to slumber still and mild.

As a mother with her child.
A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine ! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
...Geraldine ! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will ! By tairn and rill
The night-birds all that hour were still,
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu-whoo ! tu-whoo ! 310
Tu-whoo ! tu-whoo ! from wood and fell !

And see ! the lady Christabel
 Gathers herself from out her trance
 Her limbs relax, her countenance
 Grows sad and soft ; the smooth thin lids
 Close o'er her eyes ; and tears she sheds—
 Large tears that leave the lashes bright !
 And oft the while she seems to smile
 As infants at a sudden light !

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep, 320
 Like a youthful hermitess.
 Beauteous in a wilderness,
 Who, praying always, prays, in sleep,
 And, if she move unquietly,
 Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
 Comes back and tingles in her feet.
 No doubt, she hath a vision sweet,
 What if her guardian spirit 'were ?
 What if she knew her mother near ?
 But this she knows in joys and woes, 330
 That saints will aid if men will call ;
 For the blue sky bends over all !

*Part The Second*¹

"Each matin bell," the Baron saith,
 "Knells us back to world of death."
 These words Sir Leoline first said,
 When he rose and found his lady dead :
 These words Sir Leoline will say,
 Many a morn to his dying day !

And hence the custom and law began 340
 That still at dawn the sacristan,
 Who duly pulls the heavy bell,

¹ Some critics consider that the Second Part is not consistently in accord with the delicacy and subtlety of Coleridge's original design.

Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, “So let it knell !
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can !
There is no lack of such, I ween
As well fill up the space between.
In Landale Pike and Witch’s Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sexton’s ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after th’ other,
The death-note to their living brother ;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one ! two ! three ! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.”

350

The air is still ! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud ;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed ;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel,
“Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel ?
I trust that you have rested well.”

360

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who laid down by her side—
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree !
Nay, fairer yet ! and yet more fair !
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep !
And while she spake, her looks her air

370

Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinned !" said Christabel !
"Now heaven be praised if all be well !"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

380

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He who on the cross did groan
Might wash away her sins unknown.
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire Sir Leoline.
The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall
And pacing on through page and groom
Enter the Baron's Presence-room.

390

The Baron rose and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies
And gave such welcome to the same
As might beseem so bright a dame !

400

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again
"Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine ?"

Alas ! they had been friends in youth ;
But whispering tongues can poison truth ;
And constancy lives in realms above ;
And life is thorny ; and youth is vain :
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.

410

And thus it chanced, as I divine,
 With Roland and Sir Leoline,
 Each spake words of high disdain
 And insult to his heart's best brother :
 They parted—ne'er to meet again !
 But never either found another
 To free the hollow heart from paining—
 They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
 Like cliffs which had been rent asunder,
 A dreary sea now flows between.

44)

But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
 Shall wholly do away, I ween,
 The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
 Stood gazing on the damsel's face,
 And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
 Came back upon his heart again.

430

O then the Baron forgot his age,
 His noble heart swelled high with rage ;
 He swore by the wounds in Jesus' side,
 He would proclaim it far and wide
 With trump and solemn heraldry,
 That they, who thus had wronged the dame,
 Were base as spotted infamy !
 "And if they dare deny the same,
 My herald shall appoint a week
 And let the recreant traitors seek
 My tourney court—that there and then
 I may dislodge their reptile souls
 From the bodies and forms of men !"
 He spake : his eye in lightning rolls !
 For the lady was ruthlessly seized : and he kenned
 In the beautiful lady the child of his friend !

440

And now the tears were on his face,
 And fondly in his arms he took
 Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
 Prolonging it with joyous look.

450

Which when she viewed, a vision fell
 Upon the soul of Christabel,
 The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
 She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—
 (Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
 Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,
 Again she felt that bosom cold,
 And drew in her breath with a hissing sound;
 Whereat the knight turned wildly round,
 And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
 With eyes upraised, as one that prayed;

460

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
 And in its stead that vision blest,
 Which comforted her after-rest,
 While in the lady's arms she lay,
 Had put a rapture in her breast,
 And on her lips and o'er her eyes
 Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,

“What ails then my beloved child?”
 The Baron said—His daughter mild
 Made answer, “All will yet be well!”
 I ween, she had no power to tell
 Aught else; so mighty was the spell.

470

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
 Had deemed her such a thing divine,
 Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
 As if she feared she had offended.
 Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
 And with such lowly tones she prayed
 She might be sent without delay
 Home to her father's mansion.

480

“Nay!

Nay, by my soul!” said Leoline,
 “Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
 Go thou, with music sweet and loud,

And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and earn thy song.
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.

490

And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
"Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free!
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home;
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfrey's foam;
And by mine honour! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermain!—
—For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermain."

500

510

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'verflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice.
His gracious hail on all bestowing:—

520

"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
 Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
 Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
 'This day my journey should not be,
 So strange a dream hath come to me;
 That I had vowed with music loud
 To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
 Warned by a vision in my rest!
 For in my sleep I saw that dove,
 That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
 And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
 Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
 Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
 Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
 Which when I saw and when I heard,
 I wonder'd what might ail the bird;
 For nothing near it could I see,
 Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old
 tree.

530

540

"And in my dream, me thought, I went
 To search out what might there be found;
 And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
 That thus lay fluttering on the ground,
 I went and peered, and could descry;
 No cause for her distressful cry;
 But yet for her dear lady's sake
 I stooped, me thought, the dove to take,
 When lo! I saw a bright green snake
 Coiled around its wings and neck.
 Green as the herbs on which couched,
 Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
 And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
 Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
 I woke; it was the midnight hour,
 The clock was echoing in the tower;
 But though my slumber was gone by,
 This dream it would not pass away—
 It seems to live upon the eye!
 And thence I vowed this self-same day.

550

560

With music strong and saintly song
 To wander through the forest bare,
 Lest aught unholy loiter there.”
 Thus Bracy said : the Baron, the while,
 Half-listening heard him with a smile ;
 Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
 His eyes made up of wonder and love ;
 And said in courtly accents fine,
 “Sweet maid, Lord Roland’s beauteous dove,
 With arms more strong than harp or song,
 Thy sire and I will crush the snake !”
 He kissed her forehead as he spake,
 And Geraldine in maiden wise,
 Casting down her large bright eyes,
 With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
 She turned her from Sir Leoline ;
 Softly gathering up her train,
 That o’er her right arm fell again ;
 And folded her arms across her chest,
 And couched her head upon her breast,
 And looked askance at Christabel—
 Jesus, Maria, shield her well !

570

580

A snake’s small eye blinks dull and shy ;
 And the lady’s eyes they shrunk in her head,
 Each shrunk up to a serpent’s eye,
 And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
 At Christabel she looked askance !—
 One moment—and the sight was fled !
 But Christabel in dizzy trance
 Stumbling on the unsteady ground
 Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound ;
 And Geraldine again turned round,
 And like a thing, that sought relief,
 Full of wonder and full of grief,
 She rolled her large bright eyes divine
 Wildly on Sir Leoline.
 The maid, alas ! her thoughts are gone,
 She nothing sees—no sight but one !

590

The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise,
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind ;
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate !
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view—
As far as such a look could be
In eyes so innocent and blue !

600

610

And when the trance was o'er the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed :
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
"By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away !"
She said : and more she could not say :
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.

620

Why is the cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline ? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild ;
The same, for whom thy lady died !
O by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child ;
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died :
Prayed that the babe, for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride !
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline !

630

And wouldst thou wrong thy only child
Her child and thine ?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts like these had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,
Dishonour'd thus in his old age ;
Dishonour'd by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy
Brought thus to a disgraceful end—
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere—
“Why, Bracy ! dost thou loiter here ?
I bade thee hence !” The bard obeyed ;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine !

640

650

The Conclusion to Part the Second

A little child, a limber-elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks
That always finds, and never seeks.
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light :
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other ;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within

660

670

A sweet recoil of love and pity.
 And what, if in a world of sin
 (O sorrow and shame should this be true !)
 Such giddiness of heart and brain
 Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
 So talks as it's most used to do.

LORD BYRON

17. The Prisoner of Chillon.

I

My hair is grey, but not with years,
 Nor grew white
 In a single night.
 As men's have grown from sudden fears ;
 My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
 But rusted with a vile repose,
 For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
 And mine has been the fate of those
 To whom the goodly earth and air
 Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare ;
 But this was for my father's faith
 I suffer'd chains and courted death ;
 That father perish'd at the stake
 For tenets he would not forsake ;
 And for the same his lineal race
 In darkness found a dwelling-place ;
 We were seven—who now are one,
 Six in youth, and one in age,
 Finish'd as they had begun,
 Proud of Persecution's rage ;
 One in fire and two in field,
 Their belief with blood have seal'd,
 Dying as their father died,
 For the God their foes denied ;
 Three were in a dungeon cast
 Of whom this wreck is left the last.

10

20

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left ;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp :

30

And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain :
That iron is a cankering thing,

For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise,
For years—I cannot count them o'er
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

40

III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone ;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face.
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight :
And thus together—yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand but join'd in heart,
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old.

50

60

Or song heroically bold :
 But even these at length grew cold.
 Our voices took a dreary tone,
 An echo of the dungeon stone,
 A grating sound, not full and free,
 As they of yore were wont to be ;
 It might be fancy, but to me
 They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
 And to uphold and cheer the rest
 I ought to do—and did my best—
 And each did well in his degree.
 The youngest, whom my father loved,
 Because our mother's brow was given
 To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—
 For him my soul was sorely moved ;
 And truly might it be distress'd
 To see such bird in such a nest ;
 For he was beautiful as day—
 (When day was beautiful to me
 As to young eagles, being free)—
 A polar day, which will not see
 A sunset till its summer's gone,
 Its sleepless summer of long light,
 The snow-clad offspring of the sun :
 And thus he was as pure and bright,
 And in his natural spirit gay,
 With tears for nought but others' ills.
 And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
 Unless he could assuage the woe
 Which he abhorr'd to view below.

70

80

90

V

The other was pure of mind,
 But form'd to combat with his kind ;

Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood, .
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy :—but not in chains to pine :
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth did mine :
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear,
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf ;
To him his dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

100

VI

Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls :
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow ;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave inthrals :
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day ;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd ;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky ;
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

110

120

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined.

He loathed and put away his food ;
 It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
 For we were used to hunter's fare,
 And for the like had little care ;
 The milk drawn from the mountain goat
 Was changed for water from the moat,
 Our bread was such as captives' tears
 Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
 Since man first pent his fellow men
 Like brutes within an iron den ;
 But what were these to us or him ?
 These wasted not his heart or limb ;
 My brother's soul was of that mould
 Which in a palace had grown cold.
 Had his free breathing been denied
 The range of the steep mountain's side ;
 But why delay the truth—he died.
 I saw, and could not hold his head.
 Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
 Though hard I strove but strove in vain,
 To rend and gnash my bonds in 'twain.
 He died, and they unlock'd his chain,
 And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
 Even from the cold earth of our cave,
 I begg'd them as a boon to lay
 His corse in dust whereon the day
 Might shine—it was foolish thought,
 But then within my brain it wrought,
 That even in death his free born breast
 In such a dungeon could not rest,
 I might have spared my idle prayer—
 They coldly laugh'd and laid him there :
 The flat and turfless earth above
 The being we so much did love :
 His empty chain above it leant,
 Such murder's fitting monument !

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
 Most cherish'd since his natal hour,

His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race.
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free ;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day,
Was wither'd on the stalk away.
Oh, God ! it is a fearful thing,
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood ;
I've seen it, rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swell'd convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread ;
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow ;
He faded, and so calm and meek
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender, kind,
And grieved for those he left behind ;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray ;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most ;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less
I listen'd, but I could not hear ;

170

180

190

200

I call'd, for I was wild with fear ;
 I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
 Would not be thus admonished ;
 I call'd, and thought I heard a sound,
 I burst my chain with one strong bound, 210
 And rush'd to him :—I found him not.
 I only stirr'd in this black spot,
 I only lived, I only drew
 The accursed breath of dungeon-dew ;
 The last, the sole, the dearest link,
 Between me and the eternal brink,
 Which bound me to my failing race,
 Was broken in the fatal place.
 One on the earth, and one beneath—
 My brothers—both had ceased to breathe ; 220
 I took that hand which lay so still,
 Alas ! my own was full as chill ;
 I had not strength to stir, or strive,
 But felt that I was still alive—
 A frantic feeling, when we know
 That what we love shall ne'er be so.
 I know not why
 I could not die,
 I had no earthly hope but faith,
 And that forbade a selfish death. 230

IX

What next befell me then and there
 I know not well—I never knew—
 First came the loss of light, and air,
 And then of darkness too :
 I had no thought, no feeling—none—
 Among the stones I stood a stone,
 And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
 As shrubless crags within the mist :
 For all was blank, and bleak and grey :
 It was not night, it was not day ;
 It was not even the dungeon-light, 240
 So hateful to my heavy sight,

But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place ;
There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime,
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death ;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless !

250

X

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird :
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery ;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track ;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree ;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me !
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more ;
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think,
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,

260

270

280

But knowing well captivity,
 Sweet bird ! I could not wish for thine !
 Or if it were, in winged guise,
 A visitant from Paradise ;
 For—Heaven forgive that thought ! the while
 Which made me both to weep and smile—
 I sometimes deem'd that it might be
 My brother's soul come down to me ;
 But then at last away it flew,
 And then 'twas mortal well I knew,
 For he would never thus have flown,
 And left me twice so doubly lone,
 Lone as the corse within its shroud,
 Lone as a solitary cloud,—
 A single cloud on a sunny day,
 While all the rest of heaven is clear.
 A frown upon the atmosphere,
 That hath no business to appear,
 When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

290

XI.

A kind of change came in my fate,
 My keepers grew compassionate ;
 I know not what had made them so,
 They were inured to sights of woe,
 But so it was :—my broken chain
 With links unfasten'd did remain,
 And it was liberty to stride
 Along my cell from side to side,
 And up and down, and then athwart,
 And tread it over every part ;
 And round the pillars one by one,
 Returning where my walk begun,
 Avoiding only, as I trod,
 My brothers' graves without a sod ;
 For if I thought with heedless tread
 My step profaned their lowly bed,
 My breath came gaspingly and thick,
 And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

300

310

XII

I made a footing in the wall,

It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all

320

Who loved me in a human shape :
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me ;
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery ;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad ;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

330

XIII

I saw them, and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame .
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow ;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush ;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down ;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,

340

The only one in view ;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more.
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,

Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all :

350

The eagle rode the rising blast,
 Me thought he never flew so fast
 As then to me he seem'd to fly ;
 And then new tears came in my eye,
 And I felt troubled—and would fain
 I had not left my recent chain ;
 And when I did descend again,
 The darkness of my dim abode
 Fell on me as a heavy load ;
 It was as is a new-dug grave,
 Closing o'er one we sought to save—
 And yet my glance, too much opprest,
 Had almost need of such a rest.

360

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
 I kept no count, I took no note,
 I had no hope my eyes to raise,
 And clear them of their dreary mote ;
 At last men came to set me free ;
 I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where ;
 It was at length the same to me,
 Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
 I learn'd to love despair,
 And thus when they appear'd at last,
 And all my bonds aside were cast,
 These heavy walls to me had grown
 A hermitage—and all my own !
 And half I felt as they were come
 To tear me from a second home :
 With spiders I had friendship made,
 And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
 Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
 And why should I feel less than they ?
 We were all inmates of one place,
 And I, the monarch of each race,
 Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell !
 In quiet we had learn'd to dwell ;

370

380

My very chains and I grew friends,
 So much a long communion tends
 To make us what we are :—even I
 Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

18. The Ocean.

(From Childe Harold's Pilgrimage)

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll !
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain :
 Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
 Stops with the shore ; upon the watery plain
 The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
 When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
 Without a grave, unknell'd uncoffin'd, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
 Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
 And shake him from thee ; the vile strength he
wields

For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
 Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
 And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
 And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
 His petty hope in some near port or bay,
 And dashest him again to earth :—there let him lay.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
 Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
 And monarchs tremble in their capitals.
 The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
 Their clay creator the vain title take
 Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war—
 These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
 They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
 Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar—

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
 Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they ?
 Thy waters wash'd them power while they were free—
 And many a tyrant since ; their shores obey
 The stranger, slave or savage ; their decay
 Has dried up realms to deserts :—not so thou ;—
 Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves' play,
 Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow ;
 Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now,

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form,
 Glasses itself in tempests ; in all time,—
 Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or storm,
 Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
 Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime,
 The image of eternity, the throne
 Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime
 The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone
 Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless
 alone."

And I have loved thee, Ocean ! and my joy
 Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
 Borne like thy bubbles, onward ; from a boy
 I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to me
 Were a delight ; and if the freshening sea
 Made them a terror—'t was a pleasing fear
 For I was as it were a child of thee,
 And trusted to thy billows far and near,
 And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

19. Ozymandias.

I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said : Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown

broken face.

anger

expression of contempt

And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamp'd in these lifeless things,
 The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
 And on the pedestal these words appear: *united*
 "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
 The lone and level sands stretch far away. *extended*
huge

20. Hymn to the Spirit of Nature.

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle *light up*
 With their love the breath between them;
 And thy smiles before they dwindle *disappear*
 Make the cold air fire; then screen them
 In those looks, where who so gazes *hide*
 Faints, entangled in their mazes. *lost*

5

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning,
 Through the vest which seems to hide them,
 As the radiant lines of morning
 Through the clouds, ere they divide them;
 And this atmosphere divinest
 Shrouds thee wheresoe'r thou shinest.

10

Fair are others: none beholds thee
 But thy voice sounds low and tender
 Like the fairest, for it folds thee *changing grace*
 From the sight, that liquid splendour;
 And all feel, yet see thee never,—
 As I feel now, lost for ever!

15

Lamp of Earth! where'r thou movest
 Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,

20

And the souls of whom thou lovest
 Walk upon the winds with lightness
 Till they fail, as I am failing
 Dizzy, lost yet unbewailing !

21. Ode to the West Wind.

(1)

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O thou
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

5

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion' o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
 (Driving sweet-buds like flocks to feed in air)
 With living hues and odours plain and hill ;
 Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere ;
 Destroyer and Preserver ; hear, oh, hear !

10

Thou on whose stream, mid the 'steep sky's com-
 motion.

Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
 Shook from the tangled boughs of heaven and
 Ocean.

15

(2)

Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread,
 On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
 Like the bright hair lifted from the head

20

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height, *edge*
 The looks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge *highest point*
the funeral song

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre, *Tomb.* 25
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might
total or collected strength

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
 Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst oh, hear !

(3)

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
 The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, 30
 Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,
sounds of clear waters

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay, *island of Baya now*
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers 35
 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou
 For whose path the Atlantics level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
 The sea-blooms and the ozy woods which wear
 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know 40

The voice, and suddenly grew grey with fear,
 And tremble and despoil themselves : Oh, hear !

shed the leaves
 (4)

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;
 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share 45

used fall

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
 Than thou, O uncontrollable ! if even
 I were as in my boyhood and, could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
 As when, when to outstrip thy skyey speed 50
 Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
 Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
 If all upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed 55
 One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

(5)

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is ;
 What if my leaves are falling like its own !
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, 60
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
 My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
 And, by the incantation of this verse, 65

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O Wind, ✓ 70
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

Shelly's optimistic view

Summer will come is encl.

JOHN KEATS

22. The Terror of Death.

When I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
 Before high-piled books, in charact'ry
 Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain ;

When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance ;

And when I feel, fair creature of an hour !
 That I shall never look upon thee more,
 Never have relish in the fairy power
 Of unreflecting love—then on the shore

Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

23. La Belle Dame Sans Merci.

'O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 Alone and palely loitering ?
 The sedge is wither'd from the Lake,
 And no birds sing.

'O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms !
 So haggard and so woe be-gone ?
 The squirrel's granary is full,
 And the harvest's done.

'I see a lily on thy brow
 With anguish moist and fever dew,
 And on thy cheeks a fading rose
 Fast withereth too.'

'I met a Lady in the Meads,
Full beautiful—a fairy's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild. 15

'I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan. 20

'I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A fairy's song,

'She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said,
"I love thee true." 25

'She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sigh'd full sore,
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four. 30

'And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side. 35

'I saw pale Kings and Princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—"La belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall"! 40

'I saw their starved lips in the gloom
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here
 Alone and palely loitering,
 'Though the sedge is wither'd from the Lake
 And no birds sing.'

24. Ode to a Nightingale. *The poet wants to become one with God, he wants to go from the realia to his ideal world.*

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hamlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thine happiness,
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease. *rich voice* 10

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!
 O for a beaker full of the warm South!
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stained mouth;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim; *glass* *he wishes to be carried off with the bird by means of drink* *blower* *warm of place* *warm of place* 15

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret *analysis* *mental agitation*
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies
 Where but to th'nk is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs;
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow 20 *ghost like this*

craving *longing for* *for a long time* 30

Away ! away ! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retard :
 Already with thee ! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen—Moon is on throne
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy
 ways. 40

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs
 But in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Where with the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ;
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;
 Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves ;
 And mid-May's eldest child
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. 50

Darkling I listen ; and, for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused hyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath ;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy !
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
 To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown ;
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path 65

woulds to give because he woulds to escape
 from the sufferings of the world.

with the bird i.e. To attain the ideal
In order to preserve that emotion he would
die.

LORD TENNYSON

73

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;

Romantic element

The same that oft-times hath

Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam

Window

Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn,

70

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell

he comes to his
near 80

To toll me back from thee to my sole self !

Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well

As she is fated to do, deceiving elf.

Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades

Sad Song

75

Past the near meadows, over the still stream,

Up the hill side ; and now 'tis buried deep

In the next valley glades :

Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?

Fled is that music ;—do I wake or sleep ?

80

He is again brought back to the world
of realities.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

It is a dream

25. Come into the Garden, Maud.

The moral of the fable
is that the pavace
of all things
is the night only.

Come into the garden, Maud,

For the black bat, night, has flown

Come into the garden, Maud,

I am here at the gate alone ;

And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad, spread

And the musk of the roses blown.

Scent.

For a breeze of morning moves,

And the planet of Love is on high,

Beginning to faint in the light that she loves

On a bed of daffodil sky,

To faint in the light of the sun she loves,

To faint in his light, and to die.

10

All night have the roses heard

The flute, volin, bassoon ;

All night has the casement jasmine stirr'd

excited

15

To the dancers dancing in tune ;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

I said to the lily, 'There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone ?
She is weary of dance and play.
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day ;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone,
The last wheel echoes away.'

20

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine ?
But mine, but mine,' so I swore to the rose,
'For ever and ever, mine.'

30

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall ;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and to the wood,
Our wood that is dearer than all ;

35

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That when ever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

40

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me :

50

The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one ;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

55

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate,
She is coming, my dove, my dear ;
She is coming, my life, my fate ;
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near' ;
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late' ;
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear' ;
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

60

65

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthly bed ;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead ;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

70

26. The Lotos-Eaters.

'Courage !' he said, and pointed towards the land,
'This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.'
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon :
And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

*Time of dullness and
languor.*
*Picture of
a
Lotos Land is a long and slow
creation a languid atmosphere*

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke, 10
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;
 And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below. *droby*
 They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
 From the inner land ; far off, three mountain-tops,
 Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
 Stood sunset-flush'd ; and dew'd with showery drops,
 Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse. *plants*

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
 In the red West ; thro' mountain clefts the dale *valley opening* 20
 Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
 Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
 And meadow, set with slender galingale ; *small flowers*
 A land where all things always seem'd the same !
 And round about the keel with faces pale, *boat*
 Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
 The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.
 Branches they bore of that enchanted stem.
 Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
 To each, but who so did receive of them, 30
 And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
 Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
 On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,
 His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;
 And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
 And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the *after noon* yellow sand,
 Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;
 And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
 Of child, and wife and slave ; but evermore 40
 Most weary seem'd the sea weary the oar, *oars*
 Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
 Then some one said, 'We will return no more' ;
 And all atonce they sang, 'Our island home
 Is far beyond the wave ; we no longer roam.'

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
 Or night-dews on still waters between walls
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass; *a level of stone*
 Music that gentler on the spirit lies. 50
 Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes :
 Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
 skies.

Here are cool mosses deep, *grass*
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep, *a creeper*
 And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness
 And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
 While all things else have rest from weariness ?
 All things have rest : why should we toil alone, 60
 We only toil, who are the first of things,
 And make perpetual moan, *always*
 Still from one sorrow to another thrown ;
 Nor ever fold our wings,
 And cease from wanderings, *Sound sleep*
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;
 Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
 'There is no joy but calm !'
 Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things ? ✓

III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood, *wood*
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud *70 Taken away*
 With winds upon the branch, and there
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
 Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon

boon, grow, die.

Nightly dew-fed ; turning yellow
 Falls, and floats adown the air,
 Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days,
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

80

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea
 Death is the end of life ; ah, why
 Should life all labour be ?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last ?
 All things are taken from us, and become
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil ? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?
 All things have rest ; and ripen towards the grave
 In silence—ripen, fall, and cease :
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful
 ease.

90

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem
 Falling asleep in a half-dream !
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;
 Eating the Lotos day by day,
 To watch the glistening ripples on the beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray

purple.

100

To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
 To muse and brood and live again in memory, *dream*
 With those old faces of our infancy *childhood* 110
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our wives
 And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change ;
 For surely now our household hearths are cold :
 Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange :
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-bold
 Have eat our substance and the minstrel sings 120
 Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle ?
 Let what is broken so remain,
 The Gods are hard to reconcile ;
 'Tis hard to settle order once again
 There is confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labour unto aged breath,
 Sore tasks to hearts worn out by many wars 130
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

lying
 But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
 With half-dropped eyelids still,
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
 His waters from the purple hill—
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave thro' thick-twined vine— *grapes*

To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling *Bush*
 Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath divine ! 140
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling *brine*,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek : *valley*
 All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone *gentle*
 Tho' revery hollow cave and alley lone *place*
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust
 is blown. *plains*

We have had enough of action, and of motion we, *waves*
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard. when the surge
 was seething free, *150*
 Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-
 fountains in the sea

Let us swear an oath; and keep in with an equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
 On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
 For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are
 hurl'd

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are
 lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
 world ;

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring
 deeps and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,
 and praying hands. 160

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful
 song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong ;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the
 soil.

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring
 toil.

Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil ;

Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd
—down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell;
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the
shore

Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave
and oar ;

Oh, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

27. **Ulysses.**

It little profits that an idle king,

By this still hearth, among these barren crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,

That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel ; I will drink

Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd

Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

Vex the dim sea : I am become a name ;

For always roaming with a hungry heart

Much have I seen and known,—cities of men

And manners, climates, councils, governments,

Myself not least, but honour'd of them all—

And drunk delight of battle with my peers,

For on the ringing plains of windy Troy,

I am a part of all that I have met ;

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'

Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades 20

For ever and for ever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,

To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !

As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life

Were all too little, and of one to me

Little remains ; but every hour is saved

From that eternal silence, something more,

A bringer of new things : and vile it were

For some three suns to store and hoard myself,

And this grey spirit yearning in desire

To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought,
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the Isle,—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail

40

In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :
 There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toil'd and wrought and thought with
 me,—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads,—you and I are old :
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ;
 Death closes all ; but something ere the end, before 50
 Some noble work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks ;
 The long day wanes ; the slow moon climbs ; the deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60

Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles, a Greek hero
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew, who fought in
 Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho' the Trojan war
 We are not now that strength which in old days

sses is the symbol of adventure
 a star eater leads an easy going life

Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. — 70

28. Hymn.

(From Akbar's Dream)

I

Once again thou flamest heavenward, once again we
see thee rise.

Every morning is thy birthday gladdening human
hearts and eyes.

Every morning here we greet it, bowing lowly down
before thee,

Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless, in thine ever-
changing skies,

II

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing light from
clime to clime

Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee monarch in their
woodland rhyme.

Warble bird, and open flower, and, men, below
the dome of azure

Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the flame that
measures Time !

ROBERT BROWNING

29. Lyric Love.

O Lyric Love, half angel and half bird
 And all a wonder and a wild desire,—
 Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
 Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
 And sang a kindred soul out to his face.—
 Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—
 When the first summons from the darkling earth
 Reached thee amid thy chambers, balanced their blue
 And bared them of the glory—to drop down,
 To toil for man, to suffer or to die—
 This is the same voice : can thy soul know change ?
 Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help
 Never may I commence my song, my due
 To God who best taught song by gift or thee
 Except with bent head and blessing hand—
 That still, despite the distance and the dark
 What was, again may be ; some interchange
 Of grace, some splendour once thy very thought,
 Some benediction anciently thy smile :
 —Never conclude, but raising hand and head
 Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn
 For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
 Their utmost up and on,—so blessing back
 In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,
 Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud
 Some waneness where, I think, thy foot may fall !

30. Prospice.

Fear death ? —to feel the fog in my throat,
 The mist in my face,
 When the snows begin and the blasts denote
 I am nearing the place,
 The power of the night, the press of the storm,
 The post of the foe ;

own fog and snow. Ha atmosphere of
 8100miles

Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
 Yet the strong man must go ;
 For the journey is done and the summit attained,
 And the barriers fall, 10
 Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained
 The reward of it all.
 I was ever a fighter, so one fight more,
 The best and the last !
 I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and
 forbore,
 And bade me creep past
 No let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
 The heroes of old.
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
 Of pain, darkness and cold. 20
 For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
 The black minute's at end.
 And the elements rage, fiend-voices that rave,
 Shall dwindle, shall blend.
 Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain
 Then a light, then thy breast,
 O thou soul of my soul ! I shall clasp thee again,
 And with God be the rest !

31. My Last Duchess.

Ferrara

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
 Looking as if she were alive : I call
 That piece a wonder now : Fra Pandolf's hands
 Worked busily a day and there she stands.
 Will't please you sit and look at her ? I said
 "Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst
 How such a glance came there so ; not the first:

Those people, i.e. Strangers who see the picture
 would admire the picture would only ask
 how such a glance came there so ; not the first:

Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
 Her husband's presence, only, call that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess cheek : perhaps
 Fra Pandolf chanced to say 'Her mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much' or 'Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat : such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had 20
 A heart—how shall I say ?—so soon made glad
 Too easily impressed ; she liked whate'er
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
 Sir, 't was all one ! My favour at her breast,
 The dropping of the daylight in the West.
 The bough of cherries some officious fool
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
 She rode with round the terrace—all and each
 Would draw from her alike the approving speech, 30
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good ! but
 thanked

Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame 40
 This sort of trifling ? Even had you skill
 In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, 'Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me ; here you miss,
 Or there exceed the mark'—and if she let 40
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
 Her wits to yours and made excuse,
 —E'en then would be some stooping ; and I choose
 Never to stoop. Oh, Sir, she smiled, no doubt
 Whene'er I passed her ; but who passed without
 Much the same smile ? This grew ; I gave commands ;
 Then all smiles stooped together. There she stands
 As if alive. Will't please you rise ? We'll meet
 The company below, then. I repeat, 50
 The count your master's known munificence
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed ;

your master is a known generous man

Though his fair daughter's self as I avowed
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
 Together down. Sir, Notice Neptune, though,
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

MATTHEW ARNOLD

32. Shakespeare.

Others abide our question. Thou art free!

We ask and ask: Thou smilest and art still,
 Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
 That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
 Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
 Making the Heaven of Heavens his dwelling-place,
 Spares but the cloudy border of his base
 To the foil'd searching of mortality;
 And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
 Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure, 10
 Didst walk on earth unguess'd at. Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
 All weakness which impairs, all griefs that bow,
 Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

33. Dover Beach.

The sea is calm to-night,
 The tide is full, the moon lies fair
 Upon the Straits;—on the French coast, the light
 Gleams, and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay
 Come to the window, sweet is the night air! 20
 Only, from the long line of spray
 Where the ebb meets the moon-blanch'd sand,
 Listen! you hear the grating roar
 Of pebbles which the waves suck back, and fling,

At their return, up the high strand,
 Begin and cease, and then again begin,
 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
 The eternal note of sadness in.
 Sophocles long ago
 Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
 Of human misery; we
 Find also in the sound a thought,
 Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
 Was once, too, at the full and round earth's shore
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled;
 But now I only hear
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
 Retreating to the breath
 Of the night-wind down the vast edges drear
 And naked shingles of the world.
 Ah love, let us be true
 To one another! for the world, which seems
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
 And we are here as on a darkling plain
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.

40

ROBERT BRIDGES

34. England to India.

Beautiful is man's home; how fair,
 Wrapt in her robe of azurous air,
 The Earth thro' stress of ice and fire
 Came on the path of God's desire,
 Redeeming Chaos, to compose
 Exquisite forms of lily and rose.

With every creature a design
 Of loveliness or craft divine *heavenly art*
 Searchable and unsearchable
 And each insect a miracle !

Truth is as Beauty unconfined ; *one culture with 10 nations*
 Various as Nature is man's Mind ; *the culture*
 Each race and tribe is as a flower
 Set in God's garden with its dower *gift*
 Of speech instinct ; and man's grace
 Compact of all must all embrace.
 China and India *greece* *heritage of culture*
 Each hath its own inheritance
 And each to Truth's rich market brings
 Its bright divine imaginings, *cultures*
 In rival tribute to surprise
 The world with native merchandise

20

Nor least in worth nor last in years
 Of artists, poets, saints and seers,
 England, in her far northern sea,
 Fashion'd the jewel of Liberty, *christianity*
 Fetch'd from the shore of Palestine, *flow. 21 brings*
 (Land of the Lily and mystic Vine)
 Where once in the everlasting dawn
 Christ's Love-star flamed, that heavenly sign
 Whereto all nations shall be drawn,
 Unfabled Magi, and uplift
 Each to love's cradle his own gift.

30

'Thou who canst dream and understand,
 Dost thou not dream for thine own land
 This dream of truth, and contemplate
 That happier world, Love's free Estate ?

Say, didst thou dream, O Sister fair,
 How hand in hand we entered there ?

35. Indolence.

We left the city when the summer day
 Had verged already on its hot decline
 And charmed Indolence in languor lay
 In her gay gardens, 'neath her towers divine ;
 "Farewell" we said, "dear city of youth and dream !
 And in our boat we stepped and took the stream.

All through that idle afternoon we strayed
 Upon our proposed travel well begun,
 As loitering by the woodland's dreamy shade,
 Past shallow islets floating in the sun,
 Or searching down the banks for rarer flowers 10
 We lingered out the pleasurable hours.

Till when that loveliest came, which mowers home
 Turns from their longest labour, as we steered
 Along a straitened channel flecked with foam,
 We lost our landscape wide, and slowly neared
 An ancient bridge, that like a blind wall lay
 Low on its buried vaults to block the way.

Then soon the narrow tunnels broader showed,
 Where with its arches three it sucked the mass 20
 Of water, that in swirl thereunder flowed,
 Or stood piled at the piers waiting to pass ;
 And pulling for the middle span, we drew
 The tender blades aboard and floated through.

But past the bridge what change we found below !
 The stream, that all day long had laughed and played
 Betwixt the happy shires, ran dark and slow,
 And with its easy flood no murmur made :
 And weeds spread on its surface, and about
 The stagnant margin reared their stout heads out. 30

Upon the left high elms, with giant wood
 Skirting the water-meadows, interwove

Their slumbrous crowns, o'ershadowing where they
stood

The floor and heavy pillars of the grove :
And in the shade, through reeds and sedges dank,
A footpath led along the moated bank.

Across, all down the right, an old brick wall,
Above and o'er the channel, red did lean ;
Here buttressed up, and bulging there to fall,
Tufted with grass and plants and lichen green ;
And crumbling to the flood, which at its base
Slid gently nor disturbed its mirrored face.

40

Sheer on the wall the houses rose, their backs
All windowless, neglected and awry,
With tottering coigns, and crooked chimney stacks
And here and there an unused door, set high
Above the fragments of its mouldering stair,
With rail and broken step led out on air.

Beyond, deserted wharfs and vacant sheds,
With empty boats and barges moored along,
And rafts half-sunken, fringed with weedy shreds,
And sodden beams once soked to season strong.
No sight of men, nor sight of life, no stroke,
No voice the somnolence and silence broke.

50

Then I who rowed leant on my oar, whose drip
Fell without sparkle, and I rowed no more ;
And he that steered moved neither hand nor lip,
But turned his wondering eye from shore to shore
And our trim boat let her swift motion die,
Between the dim reflections floating by.

60

RUPERT BROOKE

36. Peace.

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,
 And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping
 With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
 To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
 Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,
 Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,
 And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
 And all the little emptiness of love!
 Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release
 there,
 Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending, 10
 Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;
 Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there
 But only agony, and that has ending;
 And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

Safety.

Dear! of all happy in the hour, most blest
 He who has found our hid security,
 Assured in the dark tides of the world at rest,
 And heard our word, 'who is so safe as we?'
 We have found safety with all things undying.
 The winds, and morning tears of men and mirth,
 The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying.
 And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth.
 We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing.
 We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever. 10
 War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,
 Secretly armed against all death's endeavour;
 Safe though all safety's lost: safe where men fall;
 And if these poor limbs die, safest of all. ✓

The Dead.

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich dead!
 There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,

But, dying has made us rarer gifts than gold.
 These laid the world away : poured out the red
 Sweet wine of youth : gave up the years to be
 Of work and joy, and that un hoped serene,
 That men call age, and those who would have been,
 Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow ! They brought us, for our dearth,
 Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain, 10
 Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
 And paid his subjects with a royal wage ;
 And Nobleness walks in our ways again,
 And we have come into our heritage.

The Dead, II.

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,
 Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
 The years have given them kindness. Dawn was theirs.
 And sunset, and the colours of the earth,
 These had seen movement, and heard music : known
 Slumber and waking ; loved : gone proudly friended ;
 Felt the quick stir of wonder ; sat alone ;
 Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is
 ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
 And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after, 10
 Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
 And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
 Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
 A width, a shining peace, under the night.

The Soldier.

If I should die, think only this of me :
 That there's some corner of a foreign field
 That is for ever England. There shall be
 In that rich earth a richer dust concealed,

educated
 A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
 Gave once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
 A body of England's breathing English air,
 Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
 A pulse in the eternal mind no less 10
 Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given ;
 Her sights and sounds ; dreams happy as her day ;
 And laughter, learnt of friends : gentleness,
 In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

One Day.

To-day I have been happy. All the day
 I held the memory of you, and wove
 Its laughter with the dancing light o' the spray,
 And sowed the sky with tiny clouds of love,
 And sent you following white waves of sea,
 And crowned your head with fancies, nothing worth
 Stray buds from that old dust of misery,
 Being glad with a new foolish quiet mirth.

So lightly, I played with those dark memories,
 Just as a child, beneath the summer skies, 10
 Plays hour by hour with a strange shining stone,
 For which (he knows not) towns were fire of old, *were*
 And love has been betrayed, and murder done, *brut*
 And great kings turned to a little bitter mould,

Kings died.

*How these things happened because of
 the stone just as the child plays
 with the stones without knowing.*

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

37. War Song of the Saracens.

We are they who come faster than fate : we are they
who ride early or late :
We storm at your ivory gate. Pale Kings of the Sunset,
beware !
Not on silk nor in samet we lie, not in curtained
solemnity die
Among women who chatter and cry, and children who
mumble a prayer.
But we sleep by the ropes of the camp, and we rise with
a shout, and we tramp
With the sun or the moon for a lamp, and the spray of
the wind in our hair.
From the lands where the elephants are, to the forts of
Merou and Balghar
Our steel we have brought and our star to shine on the
ruins of Rum.
We have marched from the Indus to Spain, and by God
we will go there again ;
We have stood on the shore of the plain where the
Waters of Destiny boom.
A mart of destruction we made at Jalula where men were
afraid,
For death was a difficult trade, and the sword was a
broker of doom ;
And the Spear was a Desert Physician who cured not a
few of ambition,
And drove not a few to perdition with medicine bitter
and strong.
And the shield was a grief to the fool and as bright as
a desolate pool,
And as straight as the rock of Stamboul when their
cavalry thundered along :
For the coward drowned with the brave when our battle
sheered up like a wave.
And the dead to the desert we gave, and the glory to
God in our song.

38. To Buddha seated on a lotus.

Lord Buddha, on thy Lotus-throne,
 With praying eyes and hands elate,
 What mystic rapture dost thou own,
 Immutable and ultimate?
 What peace, unravished of our ken,
 Annihilate from the word of men?

attained
 unknown or
 beyond our
 knowledge

The wind of change for ever blows
 Across the tumult of our way,
 To-morrow's unborn griefs depose
 The sorrows of our yesterday.
 Dream yields to dream, strife follows strife.
 And Death unweaves the webs of Life.

an end when we
 is dead.

For us the travail and the heat,
 The broken secrets of our pride,
 The strenuous lessons of defeat,
 The flower deferred, the fruit denied,
 But not the peace, supremely won,
 Lord Buddha, of thy Lotus-throne.

passions.

With futile hands we seek to gain
 Our inaccessible desire,
 Diviner summits to attain,
 With faith that sinks and feet that tire
 But nought shall conquer or control
 The heavenward hunger of our soul.

desire which will not come
 to us

as away

part

The end, elusive and afar
 Still lures us with its beckoning flight,
 And all our mortal moments are
 A session of the Infinite.
 How shall we reach the great, unknown
 Nirvana of thy Lotus-throne?

beyond cross-way (horizon)
 calls

SAROJINI NAIDU

Krishna Bhakti movement.

39. The Flute Player of Brindaban.

Why didst thou play thy matchless flute
 'Neath the Kadamba tree,
 And wound my idly dreaming heart
 With poignant melody,
 So where thou goest I must go,
 My flute player, with thee?

*dreaming while still
gives
that wakes you long for it*

Still must I like a homeless bird
 Wander, forsaking all;
 The earthly loves and worldly lures
 That held my life in thrall,
 And follow, follow, answering
 Thy magical flute call.

ropes

To Indra's golden-flowering groves
 Where streams immortal flow,
 Or to sad Yama's silent Courts
 Engulfed in lampless woe,
 Where'er thy subtle flute I hear
 Beloved I must go!

*lost in darkness is
Hell**Ocean*

No peril of the deep or height
 Shall daunt my winged foot;
 No fear of time-unconquered space
 Or light untravelled route,
 Impede my heart that pants to drain
 The nectar of thy flute.

*anxious to
drink*

AUROBINDO GHOSE

40. Love and Death.

In woodlands of the bright and early world
 When love was to himself yet new and warm
 And stainless, played like morning with a flower
 Ruru with his young bride Priyumvada
 Fresh-cheeked and dew eyed white Priyumvada
 Opened her budded heart of crimson bloom
 To love, to Ruru ; Ruru, a happy flood
 Of passion round a lotus dancing thrilled,
 Blinded with his soul's waves Priyumvada.
 To him the earth was a bed for this sole flower, 10
 To her all the world was filled with his embrace.
 Wet with new rains the morning earth, released
 From her fierce centuries and burning suns,
 Lavished her breath in greenness; poignant flowers
 Thronged all her eager breast, and her young arms
 Cradled a childlike bounding life that played
 And would not cease, nor ever weary grew
 Of her bright promise ; for all was joy and breeze
 And perfume, colour and bloom and ardent rays
 Of living, and delight desired the world. 20
 Then Earth was quick and pregnant tamelessly,
 A free and unvalled race possessed her plains
 Whose hearts uncramped by bonds, whose unspoiled
 thoughts
 At once replied to light. Foisoned the fields,
 Lonely and rich the forests and the swaying
 Of those unnumbered tops affected men
 With thoughts to their vast music kin. Undammed
 The virgin rivers moved towards the sea,
 And mountains yet unseen and peoples vague
 Winged young imagination like an eagle
 To strange beauty remote. And Ruru felt 30
 The sweetness of the early earth as sap
 All through him and short life an aeon made
 By boundless possibility, and love,
 Sweetest of all unfathomable love.

A glory untired. As a bright bird comes flying
From airy extravagance to his own home,
And breasts his mate, and feels her all his goal,
So from boon sunlight and the fresh chill wave
Which swirled and lapped between the slumbering
fields.

40

From forest pools and wanderings mid leaves
Through emerald ever-new discoveries,
Mysterious hillsides ranged and buoyant-swift
Races with our wild brothers in the meads,
Came Ruru back to the white bosomed girl,
Strong-winged to pleasure. She all fresh and new
Rose to him, and he plunged into her charm
For neither to her honey and poignancy
Artlessly interchanged, nor any limit
To the sweet physical delight of her

50

He found. Her eyes like deep and infinite wells
Lured his attracted soul, and her touch thrilled
Not lightly, though so light; the joy prolonged
And sweetness of the lingering of her lips
Was every time a nectar of surprise
To her lover; her smooth-gleaming shoulder bared
In darkness of her hair showed jasmine bright,
While her kissed bosom by rich tumults stirred
Was a moved sea that rocked beneath his heart,
Then when her lips had made him blind, soft siege
Of all her unseen body to his rule

60

Betrayed the ravishing realm of her white limbs,
An empire for the glory of a God.
He knew not whether he loved most her smile,
Her causeless tears or little angers swift,
Whether held wet against him from the bath
Among her kindred lotuses, her cheeks
Soft to his lips and dangerous happy breasts
That vanquished all his strength with their desire,
Maeting his absence with her sudden face,
Or when the leaf hid bird at night complained
Near their wreathed arbour on the moonlit lake,
Sobbing delight out from her heart of bliss,
Or in his clasp of rapture laughing low

70

Of his close bosom bridal-glad and pleased
 With passion and this fiery play of love,
 Or breaking off like one who thinks of grief,
 Wonderful melancholy in her eyes
 Grown liquid and with wayward sorrow large
 Thus he in her found a warm world of sweets,
 And lived of ecstasy secure, nor deemed
 Any new hour could match that early bliss.
 But Love has joys for spirits born divine
 More bleeding-lovely than his thornless rose.
 That day he had left, while yet the east was dark;
 Rising, her bosom and into the river
 Swam out, exulting in the sting and swift
 Sharp-edged desire around his limbs, and sprang
 Wet to the bank, and streamed into the wood.
 As a young horse upon the pastures glad
 Feels greensward and the wind along his mane
 And arches as he goes his neck, so went,
 In an immense delight of youth the boy
 And shook his locks joy-crested. Boundlessly
 He revelled in swift air of life, a creature,
 Of wide and vigorous morning. Far he strayed
 Tempting for flower and fruit branches in heaven,
 And plucked, and flung away, and brighter chose
 Seeking comparisons for her bloom; and followed
 New streams, and touched new trees, and felt slow
 beauty

80

90

100

And leafy secret change; for the damp leaves,
 Grey-green at first, grew pallid with the light
 And warmed with consciousness of sunshine near
 Then the whole daylight wandered in, and made
 Hard tracts of splendour, and enriched all hues.
 But when a happy sheltered heat he felt
 And heard contented voice of living things
 Harmonious with the noon, he turned and swiftly
 Went homeward yearning to Priyuvada,
 And near his home emerging from green leaves
 He laughed towards the sun; "O father Sun,"
 He cried, "how good it is to live, to love!
 Surely our joy shall never end, nor we

110

Grow old, but like bright rivers or pure winds
 Sweetly continue, or revive with flowers,
 Or live, at least as long as senseless trees."
 He dreamed, and said with a soft smile ; "Lo, she !
 And she will turn from me with angry tears
 Her delicate face more beautiful than storm
 Or rainy moonlight. I will follow her,
 And soothe her heart with sovereign flatteries ;
 Or rather all tyranny exhaust and taste
 The beauty of her anger like a fruit,
 Vexing her soul with helplessness ; then soften
 Easily with quiet undenied demand
 Of heart insisting upon heart ; or else
 Will reinvest her beauty bright with flowers.
 Or with my hands her little feet persuade.
 Then will her face be like a sudden dawn,
 And flower compelled into reluctant smiles."
 He had not ceased when he beheld her. She,
 Tearing a jasmine bloom with waiting hands
 Stood drooping, petulant, but heard at once
 His footsteps and before she was aware,
 A sudden smile of exquisite delight
 Leaped to her mouth, and a great blush of joy
 Surprised her cheeks. She for a moment stood
 Beautiful with her love before she died ;
 And he laughed towards her. With a pitiful cry
 She paled ; moaning, her stricken limbs collapsed.
 But petrified, in awful dumb surprise
 He gazed ; then walking with a bound was by her,
 All panic expectation. As he came,
 He saw a brilliant flash of coils evade
 The sunlight, and with hateful gorgeous hood
 Darted into green safety, hissing, death.
 Voiceless he sank beside her and stretched out
 His arms and desperately touched her face,
 As if to attract her soul to live, and sought
 Beseeching with his hands her bosom. O, she
 Was warm, and cruel hope pierced him ; but pale
 As jasmynes fading on a girl's sweet breast
 Her cheek was, and forgot its perfect rose.

120

130

140

150

Her eyes that clung to sunlight yet, with pain
 Were large and feebly round his neck her arms
 She lifted and, desiring his pale cheek
 Against her bosom, sobbed out piteously,
 "Ah, love !" and stopped heart-broken ; then,
 "O Love !

Alas the green dear home that I must leave
 So early ! I was so glad of love and kisses, 160
 And thought that centuries would not exhaust
 The deep embrace, And I have had so little
 Of joy and the wild day and throbbing night,
 Laughter, and tenderness, and strife and tears
 I have not numbered half the brilliant birds
 In one green forest, nor am familiar grown
 With sunrise and the progress of the eves,
 Nor have with plaintive cries of birds made friends,
 Cuckoo and rainlark and love-speak to me.
 I have not learned the names of half the flowers 170
 Around me ; so few trees know me by my name.

Nor have I seen the stars so very often
 That I should die. I feel a dreadful hand
 Drawing me from the touch of thy warm limbs
 Into some cold vague mist, all black night
 Descends towards me. I no more am thine.
 But go I know not where, and see pale shapes
 And gloomy countries and that terrible stream.
 O Love, O Love, they take me from thee far,
 And whether we shall find each other ever 180
 In the wide dreadful territory of death,
 I know not. Or thou wilt forget me quite,
 And life compel thee into other arms.

Ah, come with me ! I cannot bear to wander
 In that cold cruel country all alone,
 Helpless and terrified, or sob by streams
 Denied sweet sunlight and by thee unloved,"
 Slower her voice came now, and over her cheek
 Death paused ; then, sobbing like a little child
 Too early from her bounding pleasures called, 190
 The lovely discontented spirit stole
 From her warm body white. Over her leaned

Ruru, and waited for dead lips to move.
Still in the greenwood lay Priyumvada,
And Ruru rose not from her, but with eyes
Emptied of glory hung above his dead,
Only, without a word, without a tear.
Then the crowned wives of the great forest came,
They who had fed her from maternal breasts,
And grieved over the lovely body cold, 200
And bore it from him : nor did he entreat
One last look nor one kiss, nor yet denied
What he had loved so well. They the dead girl
Into some distant greenness bore away.
But Ruru, while the stillness of the place
Remembered her, sat without voice. He heard
Through the great silence that was now his soul,
The forest sounds, a squirrel's leap through leaves,
The chirping of a bird just overhead,
A peacock with his melancholy cry 210
Complaining far away, and tossings dim
And slight unnoticeable stir of trees.
But all these were to him like distant things
And he alone in his heart's void. And yet
No thought he had of her so lately lost.
Rather far pictures, trivial incidents
Of that old life before her delicate face
Had lived for him, dumbly distinct like thoughts
Of men that die, kept with long pomps his mind
Excluding the dead girl. So still he was, 220
The birds flashed by him with their swift small wings,
Fanning him. Then he moved, then rigorous
Memory through all his body shuddering
Awoke, and he looked up and knew the place,
And recognised greenness immutable,
And saw old trees and the same flowers still bloom.
He felt the bright indifference of earth
And all the lonely uselessness of pain,
Then lifting up the beauty of his brow
He spoke, with sorrow pale : "O grim cold death ! 230
But I will not like ordinary men
Sate thee with cries, and falsely woo thee.

And make my grief thy theatre, who lie
 Prostrate beneath thy thunderbolts and make
 Night witness of their moans, shuddering and crying
 When sudden memories pierce them like swords.

And often staring up as at a thought
 Intolerable, pace a little, then
 Sink down exhausted by brief agony.

O secrecy terrific, darkness vast, 240

At which we shudder. Somewhere, I know not where.

Somehow, I know not how, shall confront

Thy gloom, tremendous spirit, and seize with hands
 And prove what thou art and what man." He said,

And slowly to the forests wandered. There

Long months he travelled, between grief and grief

Relieving thoughts of her with every pace,

Measuring vast pain in his immortal mind.

And his heart cried in him as when a fire

Roars through wide forest and the branches cry 250

Burning towards heaven in torture glorious,

So burned, immense, his grief within him ; he raised

His young pure face all solemnised with pain,

Voiceless. Then Fate was shaken, and the Gods

Grieved for him, of his silence grown afraid.

Therefore from peaks divine came flashing down

Immortal Agni and to the Uswuttha-tree

Cried in the Voice that slays the world : "O tree

That liftest thy enormous branches able

To shelter armies, more than armies now 260

Shelter, be famous, house a brilliant God,

For the grief grows in Ruru's breast up-piled.

As wrestles with its anguished barricades

In silence an impending flood, and Gods

Immortal grow afraid. For earth alarmed

Shudders to bear the curse lest her young life

Pale with eclipse and all-creating love

Be to mere pain condemned. Divert the wrath

Into thy boughs. Uswuttha—thou shalt be

My throne—glorious, though in eternal pain, 270

Yet worth much pain to harbour divine fire."

So ended the young pure destroyer's voice.

And the dumb god consented silently.
In the same noon came Ruru ; his mind had paused.
Lured for a moment by soft wandering gleams
Into forgetfulness of pain : for thoughts
Gentle and near eyed whispering memories
So sweetly came, his blind heart dreamed she lived.
Slow the Uswuttha-tree bent down its leaves,
And smote his cheek and touched his heavy hair, 280
And Ruru turned illumined. For a moment,
One blissful moment he had felt 't was she.
So had she often stolen up and touched
His curls with her enamoured fingers small.
Lingering, while the wind smote him with her hair,
And her quick breath came to him like spring. Then he,
Turning, as one surprised with heaven, saw
Ready to his swift passionate grasp her bosom
And body sweet expecting his embrace.
Oh, now saw her not, but the guilty tree 290
Shrinking ; then grief back with a double crown
Arose and stained his face with agony.
Nor silence he endured, but the dumb force
Ascetic and inherited by sires
Fierce musing earned from the boy's bosom blazed.
"O Uswuttha-tree, wantonly who hast mocked
My anguish with the wind, but thou no more
Have joy of the cool wind nor green delight,
But live thy guilty leaves in fire, so long
As Aryan wheels by thy doomed shadow vast 300
Thunder to war, nor bless with cool wide waves
Lyric Saruswathi nations impure."
He spoke, and the vast tree groaned through its leaves.
Recognising its fate ; than smouldered : lines
Of living fire rushed up the girth and hissed
Serpentine in the unconsuming leaves ;
Last, all Hutashan in his chariot armed
Sprang on the boughs and blazed into the sky,
And wailing all the great tormented creature
Stood wide in agony : one half was green 310
And earthly, the other a weird brilliance
Filled with the speed and cry of endless flame.

But he with the fierce rushing-out of power
 Shaken and that strong grasp of anguish flung
 His hands out to the sun ; "Priyumvada !"

He cried, and at that well-loved sound there dawned
 With overwhelming sweetness miserable
 Upon his mind the old delightful times.
 When he had called her by her liquid name.
 Where the voice loved to linger. He remembered 320
 The chompuc bushes where she turned away
 Half-angered, and his speaking of her name
 Masterfully as to a lovely slave
 Rebellious who has erred : at that the slow
 Yielding of her small head, and after a little
 Her sliding towards him and beautiful
 Propitiating body as she sank down
 With timid graspings deprecatingly
 In prostrate warm surrender, her flushed cheeks
 Upon his feet and little touches soft, 330
 Or her long name uttered beseechingly,
 And the swift leap of all her body to him.
 And eyes of large repentance, and the weight
 Of her wild bosom and lips unsatisfied ;
 Of hourly call for little trivial needs.
 Or sweet unneeded wanton summoning,
 Daily appeal that never staled nor lost
 Its sudden music, and her lovely speed,
 Sedulous occupation left, quick breathing,
 With great glad eyes and eager parted lips ;
 Or in deep quiet moments murmuring 340
 That name like a religion in her ear.
 And her calm look compelled to ecstasy ;
 Or to the river luring her, or breathed
 Over her dainty slumber, or secret sweet
 Bridal outpantings of her broken name.
 All these as rush unintermitting waves
 Upon a swimmer overborne, broke on him
 Relentless, things too happy to be endured,
 Till faint with the recalled felicity 350
 Low he moaned out : "O pale Priyumvada !
 O dead fair flower ! yet living to my grief !

But I could only slay the innocent tree,
Powerless when power should have been. Not such
Was Bhrigu from whose sacred strength I spring,
Nor Bhrigu's son, my father, when he blazed
Out from Puloma's side, and burning, blind,
Fell like a tree the ravisher unjust.

But I degenerate from such sires. O Death
That showest not thy face beneath the stars, 360
But comest masked, and on our dear ones seizing
Fearest to wrestle equally with love !

Nor from thy gloomy house any come back
To tell thy way. But O, if any strength
In lover's constancy to torture dwell
Earthward to force a helping god and such
Ascetic force be born of lover's pain,
Let my dumb pangs be heard. Whoe'er thou art,
O thou bright enemy of Death, descend
And lead to me to that portal dim. For I 370
Have burned in fires cruel as the fire
And lain upon a sharper couch than swords."
He ceased, and heaven thrilled, and the far blue
Quivered as with invisible downward wings. '

But Ruru passioned on, and came with eve
To secret grass and a green opening moist
In a cool lustre. Leaned upon a tree
That bathed in faery air and saw the sky
Through branches, and a single parrot loud
Screamed from its top, there stood a golden boy 380
Half-naked, with bright limbs all beautiful—
Delicate they were in sweetness absolute :
For every gleam and every soft strong curve
Magically compelled the eve, and smote
The heart to weakness. In his hands he swung
A bow—not such as human archers use ;
For the string moved and murmured like many bees.
And nameless fragrance made the casual air
A peril. He on Ruru that face
Turned, and his steps with lovely gesture chained. 390

"Who art thou here, in forests wandering,
 And thy young exquisite face is solemnised
 With pain ? Luxuriously the gods have tortured
 Thy heart to see such dreadful glorious beauty
 Agonize in thy lips and brilliant eyes :
 As tyrants in the fierceness of others' pangs
 Joy and feel strong, 'clothing with brilliant fire,
 Tyrants in Titan lands. Needs must her mouth
 Have been pure honey and her bosom a charm.
 Whom thou desirest seeing not the green 400
 And common lovely sounds hast quite forgot."
 And Ruru, mastered by the God, replied :
 "I know thee by the cruel beauty bright,
 Kama, who makest many worlds one fire.
 Ah, wherefore wilt thou ask her to increase
 The passion and regret ? Thou knowest great love !
 Thy nymph her mother, if thou truly art he
 And not a dream of my disastrous soul."
 But with the thrilled eternal smile that makes
 The spring, the lover of Rathi golden-limbed 410
 Replied to Ruru, "Mortal, I am he ;
 I am that Madan who inform the stars
 With lustre and on life's wide canvas fill
 Pictures of light and shade, of joy and tears,
 Make ordinary moments wonderful
 And common speech a charm ; knit life to life
 With interfusions of opposing souls
 And sudden meetings and slow sorceries ;
 Wing the boy bridegroom to that panting breast,
 Smite Gods with mortal faces dreadfully 420
 Among great beautiful kings and watched by eyes
 That burn, force on the virgin's fainting limbs
 And drive to the one face never seen,
 The one breast meant eternally for her.
 By me come wedded sweets, by me the wife's
 Busy delight and passionate obedience,
 And loving eager service never satiated,
 And happy lips, and worshipping soft eyes ;
 And mine the husband's hungry arms and use
 Unwearying of old tender words and ways, 430

Joy of her hair, and silent pleasure felt
 Of nearness to one dear familiar shape.
 Nor only these, but many affections bright
 And soft glad things cluster around my name.
 I plant fraternal tender yearnings, make
 The sister's sweet attractiveness and leap
 Of heart towards imperious kindred blood
 And the young mother's passionate deep look,
 Earth's high similitude of One not earth,
 Teach filial heart-beats strong. These are my gifts 440
 For which men praise me, these my glories calm ;
 But fiercer shalt I can, wild storms blown down
 Shaking fixed minds and melting marble natures,
 Tears and dumb bitterness and pain unpitied,
 Racked thirsting jealousy and kind hearts made stone;
 And in disciplined huge souls I sow
 Dire vengeance and impossible cruelties,
 Cold lusts that linger fierce fickleness,
 That love close kin to hate, brute violence
 And mad insatiable longings pale, 450
 And passion blind as death and deaf as swords.
 O mortal, all deep-souled desires and all
 Yearning immense are mine, so much I can."
 So as he spoke, his face grew wonderful
 With vast suggestion, his human-seeming limbs
 Brightened with a soft splendour ; luminous hints
 Of the concealed divinity transpired.
 But soon with a slight discontented frown :
 "So much I can, as even the great Gods learn,
 Only with death I wrestle in vain, until 460
 My passionate godhead all becomes a doubt.
 Mortal, I am the light in stars, of flowers
 The bloom, the nameless fragrance that pervades
 Creation : but behind me, older than me,
 He comes with night and cold tremendous shade,
 Hard is the way to him, most hard to find
 Harder to tread, for perishable feet
 Almost impossible. Yet, O fair youth,
 If thou must needs go down, and thou art strong
 In passion and in constancy, nor easy 470

The soul to slay that has survived such grief—
 Steel then thyself to venture, armed by Love,
 Yet listen first what heavy trade they drive
 Who would win back their dead to human arms."
 So much the God ; but swift, with eager eyes
 And panting bosom and glorious flushed face,
 The lover : "O great Love ! beautiful Love !
 But if by strength is possible, of body
 Or mind, battle of spirit or moving speech,
 Sweet speech that makes even cruelty grow kind 480
 Or yearning melody—for I have heard
 That when Saruswathi in heaven her harp
 Has smitten, the cruel sweetness terrible
 Coils taking no denial through the soul,
 And tears burst from the hearts of Gods—then I,
 Making great music, or perfect words,
 Will strive, or staying him with desperate hands
 Match human strength against formidable Death
 But if with price, ah God ! what easier ! Tears
 Dreadful, innumerable I will absolve, 490
 Or pay with anguish through the centuries,
 Soul's agony and torture physical,
 So her small hands about my face at last
 I feel close real hair sting me with life,
 And palpable breathing bosom on me press."
 Then with a lenient smile the mighty God ;
 "O ignorant fond lover, not with tears
 Shalt thou persuade immitigate Death.
 He will not pity all thy pangs ; nor know
 His stony eyes with music to grow kind, 500
 Nor lovely words accepts. And how wilt thou
 Wrestle with that grim shadow, who canst not save
 One bloom from fading ? A sole thing that Godes
 Demand from all men living sacrifice :
 Nor without this shall any crown be grasped.
 Yet many sacrifices are there, oxen,
 And prayers, and Soma wine, and pious flowers,
 Blood and fierce expense of mind, and pure
 Incense of perfect actions, perfect thoughts
 Or liberality wide as the sun's, 510

Or ruthless labour or disastrous tears,
 Exile or death or pain more hard than death,
 Absence, a desert, from the faces loved :
 Even sin may be a sumptuous sacrifice
 Acceptable for unholy fruits. But none
 Of these the inexorable shadow asks ;
 Alone of gods Death loves not gifts : he visits
 The pure heart as the stained. Lo, the just man
 Bowed helpless over his dead, nor all his virtues
 Shall quicken that cold bosom : near him the wild 520
 Marred face and passionate and will not leave
 Kissing dead lips that shall not chide him more
 Life the pale ghost requires : with half thy life
 Thou mayst protract the thread too early cut
 Of that delightful spirit—half sweet life
 O Ruru, lo, thy frail precarious days,
 And yet how sweet they are ! simple to breathe
 How warm and sweet ! And ordinary things
 How exquisite, thou then shalt learn when lost
 How luminous the daylight was, mere sleep 530
 How soft and friendly clasping tired limbs,
 And the deliciousness of common food
 And things indifferent thou then shalt want,
 Regret rejected beauty, brightnesses
 Bestowed in vain. Wilt thou yield up, O lover,
 Half thy sweet portion of this light and gladness,
 Thy little insufficient share, and vainly
 Give to another ? she is not thyself ;
 Thou dost not feel the gladness in her bosom,
 Nor with the torture of thy body will she 540
 Throb-and cry out : at most with tender looks
 And pitiful attempt to feel more near thee,
 And weep how far she is from what she loves,
 Men live like stars that see each other in heaven,
 But one knows not the pleasure and the grief
 The others feel ; he lonely rapture has,
 Or bears his incommunicable pain.
 O Ruru, there are many beautiful faces,
 But one thyself. Think then how thou shalt mourn
 When thou hast shortened joy and feelst at last 550

The shadow that thou hadst for such sweet store."
He eased with a strange and doubtful look. But swift
Came back the lover's voice like passionate rain.
"O idle words ! For what is mere sunlight ?
Who would live on into extreme old age,
Burden the impatient world, a weary old man,
And look back on a selfish time ill-spent
Exacting out of prodigal great life
Small separate pleasures like an usurer,
And no rich sacrifice and no large act 560
Finding oneself in others, nor the sweet
Expense of nature in her passionate gusts
Of love and giving, first of the soul's needs ?
Who is so coldly wise, and does not feel
How wasted were our grandiose human days
In prudent personal unshared delights ?
Why dost thou mock me, friend of all the stars ?
How canst thou be love's god and know not this
That love burns down the body's barriers cold
And laughs at difference—playing with it merely 570
To make joy sweeter ? O too deeply I know,
The lover is not different from the loved
Nor is their silence dumb to each other. He
Contains her heart and feels her body in his,
He flushes with her heat, chills with her cold,
And when she dies, oh ! when she dies, oh me,
The emptiness, the maim ! the life no life,
The sweet and passionate oneness lost. And if
By shortening of great grief won back, O price,
Easy ! O glad briefness, aeons may envy ! 580
For we shall live not fearing death, not feel
As others yearning over the loved at night
When the lamp flickers, sudden chills of dread
Terrible ; nor at short absence agonise,
Wrestling with mad imagination. Us
Serenely when the darkening shadow comes,
One common sob shall end and soul clasp soul,
Leaving the body in a long dim kiss.
Then in the joys of heaven we shall consort,
Amid the gladness often touching hands 590

To make bliss sure ; or in the ghastly stream
 If we must anguish, yet it shall not part
 Our passionate limbs inextricably locked
 By one strong agony, but we shall feel
 Hell's pain half joy through sweet companionship.
 God Love, I am weary of words. O wing me rather
 To her, my eloquent princess of the spring,
 In whatsoever wintry shores she roam."

He ceased with eager forward eyes ; once more
 A light of beauty immortal through the limbs 600
 Gleaming of the boy-god and soft sweet face,
 Glorifying him. flushed, and he replied
 "Go then, O thou dear youth and bear this flower
 In thy hand warily. For thou shalt come
 To that high meeting of the Ganges pure
 With vague and violent Ocean. There arise
 And loudly appeal my brother, the wild sea."
 He spoke and stretched out his immortal hand,
 And Ruru's met it. All his young limbs yearned
 With dreadful rapture shuddering through them. He 610
 Felt in his fingers subtle uncertain bloom
 A quivering magnificence, half fire,
 Whose petals changed like flame, and from them breathed
 Dangerous attraction and alarmed delight,
 As at a peril near. He raised his eyes,
 But the green place was empty of the God,
 Only the faery tree looked up at heaven
 Through branches, and with recent pleasure shook.
 Then over fading earth the night was lord.
 But from Shatudru and Bipasha, streams 620
 Once holy, and loved Iravathi and swift
 Clear Chandrabhaga and Bitsta's tail
 For man, went Ruru to bright sumptuous lands
 By Aryan fathers not yet paced, but wild,
 But virgin to our fruitful human toil,
 Where nature lay reclined in dumb delight
 Alone with woodlands and the voiceless hills,
 He with the widening yellow Ganges came,
 Amazed, to trackless countries where few tribes,
 Kirath and Poundrian warred worshipping trees 630

And the great serpent. But robust wild earth
But forests with their splendid life of beasts
Savage mastered those strong inhabitants ;
Thither came Ruru. In a thin soft eve
Ganges spread far her multitudinous waves,
A glimmering restlessness with voices large,
And from the forests of that half seen bank
A boat came heaving over it, white-winged,
With a sole silent helmsman marble pale.
Then Ruru by his side stepped in they went 640
Down the mysterious river and beheld
The great banks widen out of sight. The world
Was water and the skies to water plunged.
All night with a dim motion gliding down
He felt the dark against his eyelids ; felt,
As in a dream more real than daylight,
The helmsman with his dumb and marble face
Near him and moving wideness all around,
And that continual gliding dimly on,
As one who on a shoreless water sails 650
For even to a port he shall not win
But when the darkness paled, he heard a moan
Of mightier waves and had the wide great sense
Of ocean and the depths below our feet.
But the boat stopped ; the pilot lifted on him
His marble gaze coeval with the stars,
Then in the white winged boat the boy arose
And saw around him the vast sea all grey.
And heaving in the pallid dawning light.
Loud Ruru cried across the murmur : 'Hear me. 660
O inarticulate grey Ocean, hear.
If any cadence in thy infinite
Rumour was caught from lover's moan. O Sea,
Open thy abysses to my mortal tread.
For I would travel to the despairing shades,
The spheres of suffering where entangled dwell
Souls unreleased and the untimely dead
Who weep remembering. Thither, O guide me,
No despicable wayfarer, but Ruru,
But son of a great Rishi, from all men 670

On earth selected for peculiar pangs,
 Special disaster. Lo, this petalled fire,
 How freshly it blooms and lasts with my great pain!"
 He held the flower out subtly glimmering.
 And like a living thing the huge sea trembled
 Then rose calling, and filled the sight with waves,
 Converging all its giant crests; towards him
 Innumerable waters loomed and heaven
 Threatened. Horizon on horizon moved
 Dreadfully swift; then with a prone wide sound 680
 All ocean hollowing drew him swiftly in
 Curving with monstrous menace over him.
 He down the gulf where the loud waves collapsed
 Descending, saw with floating hair arise
 The daughters of the sea in pale green light,
 A million mystic breasts suddenly bare.
 And came beneath the flood and stunned beheld
 A mute stupendous march of waters race
 To reach some viewless pit beneath the world.
 Ganges he saw as man predestined rush 690
 Upon a fearful doom foreseen, so run,
 Alarmed, with anguished speed, the river vast.
 Veiled to his eyes the triple goddess rose.
 She with a sound of waters cried to him,
 A thousand voices moaning with one pain:
 "Lover, who fearest not sunlight to leave,
 With me thou mayst behold that helpless spirit,
 Lost in the gloom, if still thy burning bosom
 Have courage to endure great Nature's night
 In the dire lands where I, a goddess, mourn 700
 Hurting my heart with my own cruelty."
 She darkened to the ominous descent,
 Unwilling, and her once so human waves
 Sent forth a cry not meant for living ears.
 And Ruru chilled; but terrible strong love
 Was like a fiery finger in his breast
 Pointing him on; so he through horror went
 Conducted by inexorable sound.
 For monstrous voices to his ear were close,
 And bodiless terrors with their dimness seized him 710

In the obscurity phantasmal. Thus
With agony of soul to the grey waste
He came, glad to the pain of passage over.
As men who through the storms of anguish strive
Into abiding tranquil dreariness
And draw sad breath assured ; to the grey waste,
Hopeless Patala, the immutable
Country, where neither sun nor rain arrives,
Nor happy labour of the plough
Fruitfully turns the soil, but in vague sands 720
And indeterminable strange rocks and caverns
That into silent blackness huge recede,
Dwell the great serpent and his hosts, writhed forms,
Sinuous, abhorred, through many horrible leagues
Coiling in a half darkness. Shapes he saw,
And heard the hiss and knew the lambent light
Loathsome, but passed compelling his strong soul.
At last through those six tired hopeless worlds,
Too hopeless far for grief, pale he arrived
Into nether air by anguish moved. 730
And heard before him cries that pierced the heart,
Human, not to be borne, and issued shaken
By the great river accursed. Maddened it ran
Anguished, importunate, and in its waves
The drifting ghosts their agony endured.
There Ruru saw pale faces float of kings
And grandiose victors and revered high priests
And famous women. Now rose from the wave
A golden shuddering arm and now a face.
Torn piteous sides were seen and breasts that quailed.
Over them moaned the penal waters on, 740
And had no joy of their fierce cruelty.
Then Ruru, his young cheeks with pity wan.
Half moaned : "O miserable race of men,
With violent and passionate souls you come
Foredoomed upon the earth and live brief days
In fear and anguish, catching at stray beams
Of Sunlight, little fragrances of flowers ;
Then from your spacious earth in a great horror
Descend into this night, and here too soon 750

Must expiate your few inadequate joys.
 O bargain hard ! Death helps us not. He leads
 Alarmed, all shivering from his chill embrace
 The naked spirit here. On my sweet flower,
 Art thou too whelmed in this fierce wailing flood ?
 Ah me ! But I will haste and deeply plunge
 Into its hopeless pools and either bring
 Thy old warm beauty back beneath the stars,
 Or find thee out and clasp thy tortured bosom
 And kiss thy sweet wrung lips and hush thy cries 760
 Love shall draw half thy pain into my limbs ;
 Then we shall triumph glad of agony.
 He ceased and one replied close by his ear :
 "O thou who troublest with thy living eyes
 Established death, pass on. She whom thou seekest
 Rolls not in the accursed tide. For late
 I saw her mid those pale inhabitants
 Whom bodily anguish visit not, but thoughts
 Sorrowful and dumb memories absolve,
 And martyrdom of scourged hearts quivering." 770
 He turned and saw astride the dolorous flood
 A mighty bridge paved with mosaic fire
 All restless, and a woman clothed in flame,
 With hands calamitous that held a sword,
 Stood of the quaking passage sentinel
 Magnificent and dire her burning face
 "Pass on" she said once more, "O Bhrigu's son :
 The flower protects thee from my hands." She stretched
 One arm towards him and with violence
 Majestic over the horrid arch compelled. 780
 Unhurt, though shaking from her touch alone
 He stood upon an inner bank with strange
 Black dreary mosses covered and perceived
 And dim and level plain without one flower
 Over it paced multitude immense
 With gentle faces occupied by pain ;
 Strong men were there and grieving mothers, girls
 With early beauty in their limbs and young
 Sad children of their childlike faces robbed.
 Naked they paced with falling hair and gaze 790

Drooping upon their bosoms, weak as flowers
 That die for want of rain un murmuring
 Always a silence was upon the place.
 But Ruru came among them. Suddenly
 One felt him there and looked, then as wind
 Moves over a still field of patient corn,
 And the ears stir and shudder and look up
 And bend innumerably flowing, so

800

All those dumb spirits stirred and through them passed
 One shuddering motion of raised faces ; then
 They streamed towards him without sound and caught
 With desperate hands his robe or touched his hair
 Or strove to feel upon them living breath
 Pale girls and quiet children came and knelt
 And with large sorrowful eyes into his looked.
 Yet with their silent passion the cold hush
 Moved not ; but Ruru's human heart half burst
 With burden of so many sorrows ; tears

810

Welled from him ; he with anguish understood
 That terrible and wordless sympathy
 Of dead souls for the living faces strange
 For that one face and found it not. He paled,
 And spoke vain words into the listless air :
 "O spirits once joyous ; miserable race,
 Happier if the old gladness were forgot !
 My soul yearns with your sorrow. Yet ah ! reveal
 If dwell my love in your sad nation lost
 Well may you know her, O wan beautiful spirits !

820

But she most beautiful of all that died,
 By sweetness recognisable. Her name
 The sunshine knew." Speaking his tears made way :
 But they with dumb lips only looked at him
 A vague and empty mourning in their eye
 Would she not first have felt me, first have raised
 Her lids and run to me, leaned back her face :
 Of silent sorrow on my breast and looked
 With the old altered eyes into my own
 And striven to make anguish understand ?

830

Oh joy, had she been here ! for though her lips
Of their old excellent music quite were robbed,
Yet her dumb passion would have spoken to me ;
We should have understood each other and walked
Silently hand in hand, almost content.”
He said and passed through those untimely dead.
Speechless they followed him with clinging eyes,
Then to a solemn building weird he came
With grave colossal pillars round. One dome
Roofed the whole brooding edifice, like cloud 840
And at the door strange shapes were pacing armed.
Then from their fear the sweet and mournful dead
Drew back, returning to their wordless grief.
But Ruru to the perilous doorway strode,
And those disastrous shapes upon him raised
Their bows and aimed. But he held out Love's flower,
And with stern faces checked they let him pass.
He entered and beheld a silent hall
Dim and unbounded moving then like one
Who up a dismal stair seeks ever light, 850
Attained a dais brilliant doubtfully
With flaming pediment and round it coiled
Python and Naga monstrous. Joruthcaru,
Tuxuc and Vasuki himself immense,
Magic Corcotaca all flecked with fire ;
And many other prone destroying shapes
Coiled. On the wondrous dais rose a throne,
And he its pedestal whose lotus hood
With ominous beauty crowns his horrible
Sleek folds, great Mahapudina : high displayed 860
He bears the throne of Death. There sat supreme
With those compassionate and lethal eyes,
Who many names, who many natures holds ;
Yama, the strong pure Hades sad and subtle,
Dharma, who keeps the laws of old untouched,
Critanta, who ends all things and at last
Himself shall end. On either side of him
The four-eyed dogs mysterious rested prone,
Watchful, with huge heads on their paws advanced :
And emanations as the godhead dim 870

Moved near him, shadowy or serpentine
 Vast Time and cold irreparable Death.
 Then Ruru came and bowed before the throne ;
 And swaying all those figures stirred as shapes
 Upon a tapestry moved by the wind,
 And the sad voice was heard : "What breathing man
 Bows at the throne of Hades ? By what force,
 Spiritual or communicated, troubles
 His living beauty the dead grace of Hell ?"
 And one replied who seemed a neighbouring voice: 880
 "He has the blood of Gods and Titans old.
 An Apsara his mother liquid-orbed
 Bore to the youthful Chyavan's strong embrace
 This passionate face of earth with Eden touched.
 Chyavan was Bhrigu's child, Puloma bore,
 The Titaness,—Bhrigu great Brahma's son.
 Love gave the flower that helps by anguish ; therefore
 He chilled not with the breath of Hades, nor
 The cry of the infernal stream made stone."
 But at the name of Love all hell was moved. 890
 Death's throne half faded into twilight : hissed
 The phantoms serpentine as if in pain,
 And the dogs raised their dreadful heads. Then spoke
 Yama : "And what needs Love in this pale realm,
 The warm great love ? All worlds his breath confound
 Mars solemn order and old steadfastness.
 But not in hell his legates come and go ;
 His vernal jurisdiction to bare Hell
 Extends not. This last world resists his power
 Youthful, anarchic. Here will he enlarge 900
 Tumult and wanton joys ?" The voice replied
 "Menaca momentary on the earth,
 Heaven's Apsara by the fleeting hours beguiled
 Played in the happy hidden glens ; there bowed
 To yoke of swift terrestrial joys she bore,
 Immortal, to that fair Gundhurva king
 A mortal blossom of delight. That bloom
 Young Ruru found and plucked, but her too soon
 Thy fatal hooded snake on earth surprised,
 And he through gloom now travels armed by Love." 910

But then all Hades swaying towards him cried,
 "O mortal, O misled ! But sacrifice
 Is stronger, nor may law of Hell or Heaven
 Its fierce effectual action supersede.
 Thy dead I yield. Yet thou bethink thee, mortal,
 Not as a tedious evil nor to be
 Lightly rejected gave the gods old age,
 But tranquil, but august, but making easy
 The steep ascent to God.' Therefore must Time
 Still batter down the glory and form of youth 920
 And animal magnificent strong ease,
 To warn the earthward man that he is spirit
 Dallying with transience, nor by death he ends,
 Nor to the dumb warm mother's arms is bound,
 But called unborn into the unborn skies.
 For body fades with the increasing soul
 And wideness of its limit grown intolerant
 Replaces life's impetuous joys by peace.
 Youth, manhood, ripeness, age, four seasons
 Twist its return and pale departing life 930
 Describes, O mortal,—youth that forward bends
 Midst hopes, delights and dreamings; manhood deepens
 To passions, toils and thoughts profound ; but ripeness
 For large reflective gathering-up of these,
 As on a lonely slope whence men look back
 Down towards the cities and the human field
 Where they too worked and laughed and loved, next age
 Wonderful age with those approaching skies.
 That boon wilt thou renounce ? Wherefore ! To bring
 For a few years—how miserably few !— 940
 Her sunward who must after all return.
 Ah, son of Rishis, cease Lo, I remit
 Hell's grasp, not oft-relinquished, and send back
 Thy beautiful life unborrowed to the stars.
 Or thou must render to the immutable
 Total all thy fruit-bearing years, then she
 Reblossoms." But the Shadow antagonist :
 "Let him be shown the glory he would renounce."
 And over the flaming pediment there moved,
 As on a frieze a march of sculptures, carved 950

By Phidias for the Virgin strong and pure,
 Most perfect once of all things seen in earth
 Or Heaven, in Athens on the Acropolis,
 But now dismembered, now disrupt ! or as
 In Buddhist cavern or Orissan temple,
 Large aspirations architectural,
 Warrior and dancing girl, adept and king,
 And conquering pomps and daily peaceful groups
 Dream delicately on, softening with beauty
 Great Bhuvanayshwar, the Almighty's house, 960
 With sculptural suggestion so were limned
 Scenes future on a pediment of fire.
 There Ruru saw himself divine with age,
 A Rishi to whom infinitely is close,
 Rejoicing in green wood or musical shade
 Or boundless mountain top where most we feel
 Wideness not by small happy things disturbed,
 Around him, as around an ancient tree
 Its seedlings, forms august or burning rose.
 They grew beneath his hands and were his work, 970
 Great kings whom time remembers and fertile
 Deep minds and poets with their chanting lips
 Whose words were seed of vast philosophies—
 These worshipped ; but above, half day, he saw
 Amazed the dawn of that mysterious Face
 And all the universe in beauty merge.
 Mad the boy thrilled upwards, then spent ebbd back.
 Over his mind, as birds across the sky
 Sweep and are gone, the vision of those fields
 And drooping faces came; almost he heard 980
 The burdened river with human anguish wail,
 And within sudden fury gathering
 His soul he hurled out of it half its life,
 And fell, like lightning, prone. Triumphant rose
 The shadow chill and deepened giant night.
 Only the dais flickered in the gloom,
 And those snake-eyes of cruel fire subdued,
 But suddenly a bloom, a fragrance. Hell
 Shuddered with bliss Resentful, overborne,
 The world-besetting Terror faded back 990

Like one grown weak by desperate victory,
And a voice cried in Ruru's tired soul.

“Arise ! the strife is over, easy now
The horror that thou hast to face, the burden
Now shared.” And with a sudden burst like spring
Life woke in the strong lover over-tried
He rose and left dim Death. Twelve times he crossed
Boithorini, the river dolorous,

Twelve times resisted Hell and hurried down
Into the ominous pit where plunges black 1000
The vast stream thundering, saw, led puissantly
From night to unimaginable night—

As men oppressed in dreams, who cannot wake,
But measure penal visions—punishments
Whose sight pollutes unheard-of tortures, pangs
Monstrous, intolerable mute agonies,
Twisted unmoving attitudes of pain,

Like thoughts inhuman in statuary. A fierce
And iron voicelessness had grasped those worlds.
No horror of cries expressed their endless pain, 1010
No saving struggle, no breathing of the soul.
And in the last hell irremediable

Where Ganges clots into that fatal pool,
Appalled he saw her ; pallid, listless, bare—
Of other than that earthly warmth and grace
In which the happy roses deepened and dimmed
With come-and-go of swift enamoured blood !

Dumb drooped she ; round her shapes of anger armed
Stood dark like thunderclouds. But Ruru sprang
Upon them, burning with the admitted God. 1020

They from his touch like infectual fears
Vanished ; then sole with her, trembling he cried
The old glad name and crying bent to her
And touched, and at the touch the silent knots
Of Hell were broken and its sombre dream
Of dreadful stately pains at once dispersed.

Then as from one whom a surpassing joy
Has conquered, all the bright surrounding world
Streams swiftly into distance, again he feels
His daily senses slipping from his grasp. 1030

So that unbearable enormous world
 Went rolling mighty shades, like the wet mist
 From men on mountain-tops ; and sleep outstretched
 Rising its soft arms towards him and his thoughts,
 As on a bed, sank to ascending void.

But when he woke, he heard the koil insist
 On sweetness and the voice of happy things
 Content with sunlight. All around him, warm,
 Was sense of old essential earth and custom
 Familiar tranquilising body and mind 1040
 As in its natural wave a lotus feels.
 He looked and saw all grass and dense green trees,
 And sunshine and a single grasshopper
 Near him repeated fiercely its note.
 Thrilling he felt beneath his bosom her ;
 Oh, warm and breathing were those rescued limbs
 Against the greenness, vivid, palpable, white,
 With great black hair and real and her cheek's
 Old softness and her mouth a dewy rose.
 For many moments comforting his soul 1050
 With all her jasmine body sun-ensnared
 He fed his longing eyes and, half in doubt,
 With touches satisfied himself of her
 Hesitating he kissed her eyelids. Sighing
 With a slight sob she woke and earthly large
 Her eyes looked upward into his. She stretched
 Her arms up, yearning, and their souls embraced ;
 Then, twixt brief sobbing laughter and blissful tears,
 Clinging with all her limbs to him, "O love,
 The green, green world ! the warm sunlight !" and
 ceased, 1060
 Finding no words ; but the earth breathed round
 them.
 Glad of her children and the koil's voice
 Persisted in the morning of the world.

SIDNEY KEYES

42. **Prospero.**

This is no man : a disembodied mind,
Spinning in its own orbit like the earth ;
A voice grown old with words and dreamy-rapt
In its own cadences—as one might say,
A little tired of always speaking truth,
He knows all secrets of the earth and air
And of men's hearts. There is no more surprise
For him in anything, nor can he hate
For long, e'en those who overthrew his rule
Temporal—for so powerful is his heart
That worldly things before it pale. Who cares
What fate may come to kings or dukes, when graves
Ope at his words and ghosts do pay him homage ?
When spirits hasten on the eager winds
To do his bidding, and the elements
Wait his command ? Oh, he might be a God
If he chose ; his voice peals out
In the dread thunder ; his all-powerful sword
The keen blue lightning ; his eyes the moon :
The winds his messengers, the very sea
His counsellor, which mutters all day long
Words of great meaning, understood by none
But Prospero. He should be a God !
Yet he is not. He loves and through his soul
Spreads a greater tenderness for all alive ;
For men and beasts ; for gentle Ariel ;
For clouds and flowers, all beauty of the earth.
He pities the cold moon, because she weeps
All night, upon a world which has no need
Of tears, for it is beautiful. Its griefs,
Cloud-shadows fleeing swiftly o'er a wood
In springtime. He is far too wise to weep
For fallen blossoms, or for youth that's gone.
He knows the spring must always come again
E'en though the sap is withered for a space
Within the hole ; and that the stream flows on

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Beneath its icy mantle. So he smiles,
For all that's past must soon return again—
That is the law. Life's but a summer gnat
Whiling away its plaintive hour in play,
But immortality's a frozen flower.
He walks the soaring night among the stars,
Which throng about him, children who would hear
Some trifling tale of how on earth true love
Came to fruition ; how an old man died
And yet was born again, for sweeter sleep,
Such tales he loves to tell. Though his clear eye
Could outstare Death, and make him powerless,
'Tis not his will to do so. Death, to him
No spectre, is a fellow sorcerer,
His only rival. Why should Prospero fear
A colleague in his Art ? When those two meet
They will yarn on for hours of charms and spells,
Discuss the properties of mandrake-root
And argue whether wolf's bane or hemlock
Is better sleeping potion. Death, at last,
Drowsy, a little bored with Prospero's talk,
Will doze away, wrapt in that droning voice.
So they will watch, those two, till all the stars
Fall from the sky ; till even time is done,
And on them creeps eternity, a sea
Of quietness while they dream on in peace.

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[illegible]

[illegible]

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

(1564—1616)

Shakespeare was born at Stratford—on Avon. His father was a husbandman and held various municipal offices at Stratford. Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist of the world and a supreme poet. The period of his dramatic activity extends from 1591 to 1612. The sonnets of Shakespeare were printed in 1609, but were probably written, (the bulk of them), between 1593 and 1596. Most of them trace the course of the writer's affection for a young patron of rank and beauty, probably the Earl of Southampton. In his songs and sonnets, Shakespeare is at "lyric play with human life".

1

Shakespeare's sonnets were written in the leisure which he got from his theatrical activities. Some of these sonnets are spoiled by excessive subtlety. Some critics are of the opinion that Shakespeare expressed his heart through them. These sonnets are mainly concerned with the idea that life and love are transitory and death leaves nothing intact. He recommends to his friend, to whom some of these sonnets are addressed, to have children so that he may overcome death by that means. But his friend would not marry. So Shakespeare thought that he would make him immortal through these sonnets.

Chronicle of wasted time : Record of past events.

Wight : Person.

Blazon : Description.

Prefiguring : Describing before hand.

Divining eyes : Eyes of a prophet.

2

This song occurs in *Twelfth Night* (II, iii, 40). It is sometimes entitled "Carpe Diem". The songs which Shakespeare put in his plays are most original and spontaneous. They fit into the atmosphere of the play in which they occur. Taken out of context they lose some of their atmosphere. The theme of almost all the songs is the same—that youth is a stuff that will not endure. It is idle to try to draw too much meaning from these songs because they are like magic which loses its effect upon analysis.

3

This is the dirge sung over the body of Imogen in *Cymbeline* (IV. ii, 258), and is entitled "Fidele." This is a most haunting song and its idea is one of resignation to death. We must cheerfully die,

since death ends all sorrow and all joys. This is one of the more ambitious of Shakespeare's songs.

Censure : Adverse judgement, opinion.

Consign : Deliver, hand over (to death).

JOHN MILTON

(1608—74)

John Milton was educated at St. Paul's School and Christ's College, Cambridge. While at Cambridge he wrote the stately "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity" in which he first struck a distinctive note. In the course of his stay at Horton (1632-1637) he composed "L' Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Comus," and "Lycidas." During the twenty years that elapsed between the composition of "Lycidas" (1637) and "Paradise Lost", Milton wrote no poetry but the sonnets and some Latin and Italian pieces. "Paradise Lost" is supposed to have been finished in 1663, but was published in 1667. His last poems, "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" were published together in 1671.

Milton is one of the most erudite poets, remarkable for the grandeur and sublimity of his style, particularly in his longer poems. As Wordsworth puts it, in Milton's hand the sonnet "became a trumpet whence he blew Soul-animating strains, alas, too few."

4

This is an extract from Book VII of "Paradise Lost." 'Paradise Lost' is popular with the English-speaking peoples as the Bible or 'Pilgrim's Progress.' It is a fashion nowadays to run down Milton and say that his cosmogony is all wrong and that in his poetry there is a divorce between thought and feeling. In this way Addison's criticism of him that the language sunk under him is being kept alive. This charge against Milton is only true in part. He did change the language of English poetry because he felt that it had been vulgarised by common poets. He did not invent new words so much as he tried to use old words in their original sense. He was also deeply read in Latin and Greek literatures and that is why so many references to classical names occur in his poems. There is another charge against 'Paradise Lost'; that is glorifies the Devil at the expense of God. This charge is partly true and Blake was right when he said that "Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell." There are passages of great lyrical beauty in 'Paradise Lost,' as for example, Milton's famous prayer to Light. Since he was blind and wrote by his ear, many of his sentences

are very long. He was a great musician and depended upon the second effects of what he wrote. That is why his poems are best read aloud. He is often considered as the second English poet after Shakespeare. He was not inferior to Shakespeare in poetic sensibility but in imaginative sympathy. He could not put himself into the place of other people as Shakespeare could. He was without a sense of humour and was more deeply read in books than in human nature. So long as English poetry exists, 'Paradise Lost' will be admired and accepted as one of the greatest poems of the world.

Urania : The word "Urania," signifies heaven. Here the poet means Heavenly Muse.

Olympian hill : Supposed to be the abode of the gods and goddesses in ancient Greek mythology.

Pegasean Wing : The winged horse, Pegasus, said to belong to the Muses, was emblematical of flights of imagination.

Muses nine : Urania amongst the Muses (nine goddesses presiding over the various kinds of poetry, arts and sciences), was the patroness of Astronomy.

Empyreal : Formed of pure fire or light ; pertaining to the highest and purest region of heaven.

Tempering : Mixed in due proportion.

Native element : Earth.

Bellerophon : The son of Glaucus, was a beautiful youth, who was falsely accused by Sthenoboea, Queen of Argos, to her husband. Proetus, King of Argos, sent him in consequence into Lyoid with letters commanding that he should be exposed to destruction. He escaped from many perilous enterprises forced on him ; but when he attempted to mount to heaven on the winged Pegasus (incited to the trial by vain glory), he was thrown off, and wandered on Allian plains for the remainder of his life. The Allian plains were in Cilicia.

Barbarous dissonance : Vulgar poetry. The type of poetry against which the language of 'Paradise Lost' was a protest.

Bacchus : A god of fertility, of nature and especially of wine.

Thracian bard etc. : Orpheus was torn to pieces by the Bacchanalian women of Rhodope, a mountain of Thrace ; nor could his

4

mother, the Muse Calliope, save him,. Elton thinks that Milton here alludes to the dissolute Court of Charles II.

5

Milton was a great writer of sonnets and some of his sonnets are amongst the most memorable in the English language. They are quite different from the sonnets written by Shakespeare or by the other Elizabethans. Some of the sonnets refer to topical subjects, some are deliberately rude and harsh. But whatever Milton wrote, he could not keep out beauty from his writings. He wrote the sonnet entitled 'On His Blindness' in 1652. There is a pathetic dignity in this sonnet.

Ere half my days : Milton lost his eyesight in 1652.

That one talent : A reference to the Parable of the Talents (St. Matthew's Gospel XXV, 14-30).

6

This sonnet was written at Cambridge, and sent in a letter to a friend. It will be interesting to compare this sonnet or the one before it with Shakespeare's sonnet in your text-book. The form that Milton used is called Italian. This form has two quatrains followed by two tercets, each with different rhymes. There is no division in the idea. All the fourteen lines follow a single thought.

It is significant how early in life Milton had a serious purpose in view which later on expressed itself in 'Paradise Lost'. Milton believed that a man to write a great poem must have in himself something really great to express. That is why in this sonnet he says that he is waiting for an inner ripeness to appear in him which will later on lead him to do great tasks under the eyes of God whom he calls in the last line of this sonnet his 'great Task-Master'.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631—1700)

John Dryden was the descendant of an ancient family, his grand-father being Sir Erasmus Dryden of Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire. He was born near Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, in 1631, and was admitted as a king's scholar at Westminster under the celebrated Dr. Buttsby, whence he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, being here elected to scholarship. After leaving the University he went to London, where he acted as secretary to his cousin Sir Gilbert Pickering, a favourite of Cromwell, and on the death of the Protector he wrote his heroic stanzas on that event.

At the Restoration, however, he hailed the return of Charles II in *Astrae Redux*, and from that time his devotion to the Stuarts knew no decay. In 1671 Dryden was appointed to the offices of royal historiographer and poet-laureate. On the accession of James in 1685, he became a Roman Catholic, a conversion the sincerity of which was regarded at the time with suspicion. At court, the new convert was received with open arms, a considerable addition was made to his pension, and he defended his new religion at the expense of the old one in the poem *The HIND and the PANTHER*. At the Revolution, Dryden was deprived of the offices of poet-laureate and historiographer, and of the income which these offices secured him. During the remaining ten years of his life he produced some of his best work, including his admirable translations from the classics. He died in 1700, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Dryden is impersonal, while Milton is nothing if not egoistic. 'Lycidas' is not a lament upon Edward King but a poem about John Milton. Milton nearly always, directly or indirectly, speaks about himself, whereas Dryden very nearly does so. This self-effacement appeals to the modern classical mind. It is a great virtue to be able, like Dryden, to appropriate a thought directly into poetry. Milton, on the other hand, was incapable of "treating an abstract idea and turning it into great poetry : no idea could set the poetic faculties at work within him unless it was one that affected him profoundly as an individual."

Milton forgot that the language of the age is the best language for poetry. He built up a diction of his own, thereby making the language stiff and tortuous, even distorted, unusable in that form by other poets while Dryden 'made it miraculously flexible'. Dryden's verse often displays those combinations of words which distinguish poetry from prose, and which adorn as well as mar much English verse in the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth century. Dryden was markedly influenced by the Roman poet Virgil in certain features of diction common to all the poets of the neo-classical school. A considerable number of Dryden's Latinized words and idioms and pseudo-classical circumlocutions may be traced to Virgil.

Dryden occupies in the seventeenth century poetry the position that Spenser did in the sixteenth century. Like Spenser he is sometimes called the poets' poet because like Spenser, he has influenced many poets who followed him. Walter Scott called him the third great English poet after Shakespeare and Milton. Keats was influenced by Dryden, as can be seen from the poems which he wrote in couplets. Some eminent critics hold that his influence can be seen in Wordsworth and Tennyson also.

Dryden was a great satirist. He could reason in verse and he wrote some of the greatest political satire on the burning questions

of his day. He writes of politicians and other great figures of his age with a great sense of realism and that makes his satire, in which he exposes the vanities, vices and follies of his contemporaries, all the more effective. In Pope's satire there is more wit and more malice, but no satire in English is so weighty as Dryden's or gives the impression of the poet being so much superior to his victims.

"Alexander's Feast" was very much praised in the eighteenth century as a poem in which sound and sense are completely controlled and blended and which indicates changes in mood. Dryden called this ode the best of all his poems. He is reported to have completed it at one sitting. He wrote it for St. Cecilia's Day for a musical society in 1697. St. Cecilia was a Christian martyr who died at Rome in 230 A. D. When the Academy of Music was founded at Rome in 1584, she was adopted, perhaps inappropriately, as the patroness of church music. The poem in our text is only the first four stanzas and the last chorus is omitted from the fourth stanza. The complete poem is in seven stanzas.

Persia etc. : This feast celebrates the conquest of Persia by Alexander in 333 B. C.

Thais : A courtesan of Athens, who accompanied Alexander to the East, and at whose instance he is said to have burned Persepolis.

Timotheus : A Boatian musician and favourite of Alexander.

Olympia : Properly Olympias, the wife of Philip of Macedon. The poet refers to the tradition that the real father of Alexander was Jupiter Amon who visited Olympias in the form of a serpent or dragon. (Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, ii-iii).

Radiant spires : Coils.

Bacchus : God of wine in classical mythology, called Dionysus by the Greeks.

Hautboys : A reed instrument known now as the oboe.

Darius : King of Persia from 336 B. C. to 331 B. C. when he died after having been defeated by Alexander.

This is an extract from Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel", a satirical poem in heroic couplets, published in 1681; dealing in allegorical form with the attempt by Lord Shaftesbury's party to

exclude the Duke of York from the succession and to set up the Duke of Monmouth in his place. Dryden wrote this poem before Shaftesbury's trial began to influence popular opinion against him, but Shaftesbury was acquitted. The allegory is based upon the second book of Samuel in the Bible. The poem is noteworthy for its brilliant ridicule, vocabulary and versification and shows how great Dryden was as a satirist.

Absalom : See 2 "Samson" xv-xviii. Here James Stuart, Duke of Monmouth, the natural son of Charles II and Lucy Waiters.

Achitophel : Here Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury (1621-83) the leader of the Whigs in promoting the Exclusion Bill (1679). He brought Monmouth back from Holland (1679) and encouraged him in his pretensions.

Pigmy body : Shaftesbury was small in size.

Over-informed : Made his mind so active that it troubled his body.

Triple bond : Refers to alliance of England, Holland and Sweden against France in 1668. Dryden was wrong when he thought that this alliance was broken by Shaftesbury.

So easy etc. : The next dozen lines were put into the poem by Dryden after Shaftesbury had been acquitted.

Abbethdin : i. e., Chief Justice ; literally, father of the house of Judgment.

David : Here Charles II.

Wanted : Lacked. The immortal song is Dryden's poem.

ALEXANDER POPE

(1688—1744)

Alexander Pope was born in 1688. His father was a London merchant and a devout Catholic. Soon after his son's birth the father retired to Binfield, near Windsor. Pope was small, delicate, and deformed. His education was a desultory one. He picked up the rudiments of Greek and Latin from the family priest, and was successively sent to two schools : one at Twyford, the other in London. He was taken home at the age of twelve, received more priestly instruction, and read so eagerly that his feeble constitution threatened to break down. Before he was fifteen, he attempted an epic poem, and at the age of sixteen his Pastorals procured him the notice of several eminent persons. In 1711, he published his poem, the *ESSAY ON CRITICISM*, which was followed by the *RAPE OF THE LOCK*, a polished and witty narrative poem founded on an

incident of fashionable life. From 1713 to 1726 he was engaged on a poetical translation of Homer's work, the *ILIAD* (completed in 1720) being wholly from his pen, the *ODYSSEY* being only half. In 1728, he published his *DUNCIAD*, a mock heroic poem intended to overwhelm his antagonists with ridicule. His *ESSAY ON MAN* was published anonymously in 1733, and completed and avowed by the author in the next year. This work is distinguished by its poetry rather than by its reasonings, which are confused and contradictory. He died on May 30, 1744, and was interred at Twickenham.

Indian students are taught to regard Pope as no poet. This is a very partial estimate and is based on a romantic bias. Pope's poetry is not without its romantic side as one learns when one reads more of him. Pope was not a romantic poet in the sense that he dealt with thoughts which went beyond the reaches of our souls. He specialized in dealing with what was often thought before but never so well expressed. This was his aim and in it he had amazing success. He is neat and clever in words and is a master of poetic melody and rhythm. It is true that his poetry is more intellectual than emotional, but it is not without imagination, feeling and passion. But Pope keeps his imagination within the bounds in which it was kept by a man of fashion in the eighteenth century. His masterpiece is "*The Rape of the Lock*." A modern critic says of Pope, "Pope's merits are of a kind not likely to be affected by time : a lively fancy, a power of satire almost unrivalled, and a skill in using words so consummate that there is no poet, excepting Shakespeare, who has left his mark upon the language so strongly. He has said in the best words what we all know and feel, but cannot express, and has made that classical which in weaker hands would be common-place. His sensibility to the claims of his art is exquisite, the adaptation of his style to his subject shows the hand of a master. All these are gifts to which none but a great poet can lay claim."

Pope excelled in satire and in the heroic couplet to which he gave a polish and sparkle never to be surpassed. He is one of the most oft-quoted of English poets for his pointed and shining epigrams.

This is from Epistle II of Pope's "*Essay on Man*". The '*Essay on Man*' was published in 1733 and is a summary of eighteenth century philosophy. It shows its complacent optimism and emphasises that "whatever is, is right." The optimism of the poem is shallow to a modern reader, but Pope did not think so. He said as follows about this poem :—

“Having proposed to write some pieces on human life and manners, such as (to use my Lord Bacon’s expression) came home to men’s business and bosoms, I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering man in the abstract, nature and his state ; since, to prove any moral duty to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.”

Pelf : wealth.

Sot : A drunkard.

The starving chemist : ‘Chemist’ is here used in the old sense of ‘alchemist’.

Beads : Prayers (Anglo-Saxon).

Bauble : Toy.

10

This elegy was published in 1717. ‘The Unfortunate Lady’ has been identified at last as a Mrs. W. or Mrs. Western (the sister of the first Viscount Gage), who committed suicide after an unhappy marriage. Pope befriended her in her miseries.

“In execution this elegy ranks with Pope’s most consummate efforts, in pathetic power, it stands almost alone among his work.” (A. W. Ward). Note that this is a romantic poem in the accepted sense of the word, although Pope is regarded as a classical poet.

Cored : Bleeding, since she committed suicide.

A Roman’s part : It was not considered a crime in Rome to commit suicide. It is the same attitude which we find in Japan.

Reversion : Meeting.

The ball : This earth.

The Furies : In Greek mythology, the avenging deities, who executed the curses pronounced upon criminals or inflicted famines and pestilences.

Sable weeds : Dark clothes.

Nor polished marble etc. : In the eighteenth century nobles had their statues put upon their graves.

Dirgo : Song of mourning.

WILLIAM COWPER

(1731—1800)

Cowper was educated at a private school (where he was bullied) and at Westminster School. Stophord A. Brooke remarks : "Cowper is the first of the poets who loves Nature entirely for her own sake." His poetry is notable as heralding a simpler and more natural style than the classical style of Pope and his inferior imitators.

Cowper spoke of himself as "a stricken deer that left the herd long since." This remark reveals Cowper. He was physically weak and suffered from fits of madness. He was religious and timid. All his writings are not of high quality. He is not a great poet but a modest one who spoke about the beauty of nature and English village society in the eighteenth century. He reminds us of Blake in being all alone of his type. He wrote many hymns. He had a most lovable personality and made life-long friends because of that.

The form of his verse was of the eighteenth century i. e., he wrote in the heroic couplet. But the content of his poem was romantic. There was personal note in many of his poems which is not like the typical eighteenth century poets. He chose homely and simple themes like Wordsworth whom in some days he anticipates. He loved animals, as Burns did. He had a deep melancholy in his temperament which can be seen in the poems in the text. What Cowper aimed at in his poems can be seen from the following quotation :—

"Every man conversant with verse-writing knows, and knows by painful experience, that the familiar style is of styles the most difficult to succeed in. To make verses speak the language of prose without being prosaic.....to marshal the words of it in such an order as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporary speaker, yet without meanness, harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake."

Cowper wrote this fine but gloomy poem shortly before his death. He wrote it in memory of Admiral George Anson (1697-1762) who was a distinguished English sailor and went round the globe in 1740-1744. His voyages were described in a

book called "*A Voyage Round the World*" (1748). In one of the incidents of this book, Cowper found the idea which inspired this deeply personal lyric. It was the last of his poems and expresses the despair that haunted Cowper all through his life. There is something in it of the tone of his hymns and also a unique combination of informality and reserve. The incident occurred in a ship called 'The Centurion.' The incident has been movingly described by one who saw it as follows:—"As our ship kept the wind better than any of the rest, we were obliged, in the afternoon, to veer ship, in order to join the squadron to the leeward.....And as we dared not venture any sail abroad, we were obliged to make use of an expedient which answered our purpose; this was putting the helm a-weather and manning the fore-shrouds, (i. e. using the crew as sails). "But though this method proved," successful for the end intended, yet in the execution of it one of our ablest seamen was carried over-board; and notwithstanding the prodigious agitation of the waves, was perceived that he swam, very strong, and it was with the utmost concern that we found ourselves incapable of assisting him; and we were the more grieved at his unhappy fate since we lost sight of him, struggling with the waves, and conceived from the manner in which he swam that he might continue sensible for a considerable time longer of the horror attending his irretrievable fate."

Billows : Waves.

Floating home : Ship.

Albion : England.

Her : It refers to England though it may mean the ship also.

Brine : Waves of salt water.

Scudded : Ran before wind as in a gale.

Succour : Help.

Coop : A cask or a barrel, thrown into the sea to help a drowning person.

Destiny : Here, of course, death.

Respite : Period of rest, (usually short).

Descanting : Holding a discourse. Here, writing a poem.

Allayed : Made light.

Propitious : Fortunate.

This is an extract from Book I of Cowper's "*The Task*," which is his most characteristic poem, published in 1785. It marked an uprising against the artificial eighteenth century Poetic Diction and heralded a more simple and more natural style. "*The Task*" is written in blank verse, which tries to copy Milton, and its theme is "God made the country and man made the town." The poem began as a mock heroic poem about the sofa in Cowper's home. When it was finished, it became a record of the inner life of the poet. We can compare it with Wordsworth's "*The Prelude*." This book also contained the history of John Gilpin which many of you must have read in your schools. Those of you who are interested in Cowper, should read a poem of his called "Upon the receipt of my mother's picture."

Groves : A typical eighteenth century word. It means a wood of small size, generally pleasant or ornamental in character.

Sedan : A covered chair carried on two poles, generally by two bearers.

Your element : Here it means the town.

Pensive : Thoughtful.

Our softer satellite : The moon.

Worthier of a fan : Effeminate.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

(1770—1850)

(1) 1770-1790. William Wordsworth was born at Cocker-mouth, in Cumberlands, on April 7, 1770. He was the son of John Wordsworth, a law agent. Being left an orphan at fourteen he was educated by his uncles, who intended him for the Church. The revelation of new spirit in nature came to him even as a boy.

When I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in slippery rock,
But ill sustained.

In 1787 he went to St. John's College, Cambridge. The intellectual and social life of the University attracted him but little. In the third long vacation he set out with Jones from the same college on a walking tour in the Continent. He visited Switzerland and France.

Europe at that time was thrilled with joy
 France standing on the top golden hours
 And human nature seeming born again.

At the University, Wordsworth led a life apart, feeling no admiration or interest for the place, its studies or society. He was glad to get away after passing his examination for the B. A., in 1791.

(2) 1791-1797. After some time spent in London, he started on a second tour through France. She was yet in the throes of the Revolution, and Wordsworth threw himself into the movement with ardent zeal. The longing of his youth seemed to be adequately expressed in the hopes that the Revolutionists held out to the world. In the inexperience of youth he felt :

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
 But to be young was very heaven.

The lawlessness of the later phases of the Revolution disgusted him and at the out-break of war in 1792 he came back to England. The episode of the French Revolution forms the chief outward event of his life, and was the occasion of a momentous crisis in his life. He emerged out of his disappointments sobered and morally fortified. Ever afterwards he sang the praises of England and clung to traditions.

In 1795 a friend left him a legacy of about £900. With the help of another £1000 from the estate of their father, Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy now settled down at Racedown. Much against the wishes of his uncles, Wordsworth now devoted himself to the cultivation of poetry. The influence of his surroundings, with the constant companionship of his sister, laid the first foundation of his "religion of nature."

She (Dorothy) in the midst of all preserved me still
 A poet, made me seek beneath that name,
 And that alone, my office upon Earth.

In 1797, they moved to Alfoxden to be near Coleridge at Nether Stowey. "Descriptive Sketches" and the "Evening Walk" belong to this period. Wordsworth's genius had not yet matured, and he was just learning to observe nature and note its importance in the life of man.

(3) 1797-1814. These were by far the most fruitful years of the life of Wordsworth. His creative power and imagination

were at their best. In 1798 was published the first edition of the "*Lyrical Ballads*" to which Coleridge contributed "*The Ancient Mariner*". It was hardly recognised at the time what an epoch making production this was. The "*Lyrical Ballads*" opened up a new horizon for English poetry, the ultimate limits of which have not been explored even to the present day.

"*The Prelude*", (published 1850), "*Ode to Duty*," "*The Immortality Ode*," "*The Excursion*," and many other poems and sonnets belong to this period.

In the autumn of 1798, Wordsworth, his sister Dorothy and Coleridge went to Germany. German literature of philosophy had very little effect on him, and he settled down among his native mountain till 1813, when he shifted to Rydal Mount to live there for the rest of his life.

In 1802, he married his cousin, Mary Hutchinson. Next year he went on a visit to Scotland, where he met Scott. In 1813, he was appointed Distributor of Stamps for his district. The income was a welcome addition to the poor resources of the poet.

(4) 1814-1850. The rest of his life was spent in calm retirement among the scenes he most dearly loved. He wandered through Scotland, Holland, Belgium, France, Italy and Switzerland. His fame was growing and his work was finding favour with the public. In 1842, he was placed on the Civil Pension List, and on the death of Robert Southey in 1843, he succeeded to the Poet-Laureateship. The most important poem of this period is "*Laodamea*".

In 1850 he died peacefully, with a whole nation, now at last conscious of his greatness, mourning his loss.

Wordsworth led a revolt against the artificial sentiment and poetic style of the eighteenth century. At least in theory he permitted himself the use of very simple themes as subjects for his poems and advocated that the only language fit to be the expression of the poet's thoughts was the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation." He rigidly "abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful but which have been foolishly repeated by bad poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower".

But the supreme and abiding interest of the poetry of Wordsworth is not in his poetic theories. His poems, especially "*The Prelude*" reveal to us the growth of his mind, and the gradual realisation of a message for mankind. As his art progresses and his mind matures, we can see the fusion of his early passion for

nature with a steadily growing interest in man, till he arrives at the realisation that it is one soul that runs through man and nature alike.

In his youth, nature was all in all to him. Its beauty, its sublimity, and its quiet were loved with the intensity and singleness of devotion that inspire that period of our lives.

The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours, and their forms, were then to me an
 appetite.

As the years advance, moods of melancholy thought become more and more pronounced. Sombre effects in nature are preferred because they harmonise so easily with the newly arising serious thoughts : the passion for nature is no longer an all consuming appetite, but a growing communion, a commingling of kindred streams :

Finally whatever
 I saw, or heard, or felt was but a stream
 That flowed into a kindred stream.

When ultimately, the French Revolution, with its large hopes of equality and liberty, drew out all the homage of his heart for mankind, and with its excesses a few years later dispersed all his glorious visions into a mist of despair, he went back to nature to seek some hope and consolation there.

Through the tender ministration of his devoted sister Dorothy, Wordsworth regained his spiritual equilibrium. In his own suffering, his endurance of it, and his final triumph through the agency of nature, he saw the one problem of mankind. The future of man rested not with the masses congregated in cities and clamouring for political emancipation, but with the types represented by the simple peasantry of England, gifted with fortitude and patience. Again and again he reverted to the moral of their simple and unsophisticated lives, and derived from the trivial incidents of the life of a leech-gatherer as much consolation and strength as one would from the biography of a hero, or a "*Michael*." "*Simon Lee*," "*This Idiot Boy*," are sympathetic, almost affectionate studies of simple life to which the poet was drawn by its moral dignity, pathos, and grand primeval emotions.

The unity of life in man and nature, and their common purpose, formed the basis of his thoughts. Nature is so prized by him, because it can ennoble and enrich a mind that is receptively open to its influences. In all his poems of nature there runs a vein of moral feeling. 'The meanest flower that blows gives him thoughts that "lie too deep for tears."' In the setting sun he perceives the race of man come to finish, and in the quiet sounds of nature he hears the still, sad music of humanity. Flowers, woods, and rocks become not symbols significant only to a man who can read their meaning, but obvious manifestations of a divine element in nature, easily realisable by any man.

These contemplative modes of feeling place his lyrics in a class by themselves. Unlike the lyric poets of his age, he had a more enduring and stable lyrical vein. He has few passing moods, no swift, ever-changing emotions of a very sensitive poetic temperament. His poems, a blend of thought and emotion, are hardly ever written in the heat of passion, and therefore very often reflect the larger and more universal moods of the human mind.

The vein of reflection, often started by impressions from the outside world, is markedly expressed in some of the best known of his poems. They reveal that mystical side of his thought in which he could detach himself from the world of sense, and view truths that wake to perish never. Life-long contemplation of nature and of the working of the human heart, led to a communion with divine element in both ; so that for him, in his exalted moods :

The burthen of the mystery
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Was lightened.

The expression of such chastened moods add an imperishable value to his poetry.

Though the mind of man is his haunt and the main region of his song, some important phases of it find no expression there. He is peculiarly deficient in the experiences of love ; he shows contempt and indifference towards thoughts of noble worldly ambition and though appreciative of the ways of children and animals, he ignores the purely laughable side of life.

His message to mankind is the attainment of a noble and just life through the contemplation of nature, in which, as in man, the Infinite stands revealed.

This poem was composed in and near the Wye Valley in mid-July, 1798. "No poem of mine," says Wordsworth, "was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol."

Outline : (1) Description of the scene.

(2) A recounting of the gradual development of Wordsworth's mature conception of nature.

(3) Address to Dorothy.

The theme of the poem is the experiences which the poet's mind had with the forms and images of nature. At first he reacted in a sensuous way to the physical qualities of these things, and later he reached in a spiritual way to the eternal Beauty, the source of these things. But each stage is important in the poet's development. The forms and images of nature excite in him, at first, an immediate, extrinsic and organic joy. Wordsworth suggests the intensity and immediacy of his reaction by describing it as "an appetite." Later he subtilized and submitted this joy to intercourse with the eternal Beauty. Physical delight became spiritual ecstasy. Through their magic powers the beauteous forms of nature have so wrought in him that he is "laid asleep in body" and becomes a living soul and sees into the life of things. The poem embodies Wordsworth's faith : a passionate intuition of God present in the universe and in the mind of man. To the end of his life this intuition remained the living centre of his creed.

This poem expresses very clearly and powerfully how much Wordsworth cared for nature and what it meant to him. Although he does not say so, he gives to nature the place of God. He is not merely the lover and worshipper of nature : he looks deep into its life to see what he himself calls the 'life of things.' He finds in nature an immanence which is like God. Note in this poem the characteristic of Wordsworth's mind that nature in absence, when he only remembered it, meant more to him than when he saw it with his eyes. This is an example of the mystic or transcendental note in his experience of nature.

A soft inland murmur : i. e., not of the sea but of a river.

Pastoral farms : Farms in the countryside.

Vagrant dwellers : Tramps or Gipsies who have no settled home.

As is a landscape to a blind man's eyes : i. e., non-existent or forgotten.

With tranquil restoration : Refers to Wordsworth's belief that nature exercised a healing influence on those who went to it in a receptive mood.

Corporeal frame : Body. Note the mystical experience in which Wordsworth rises to some consciousness in which the body is forgotten.

Sylvan : Passing through the woods.

Dizzy raptures : Note that Wordsworth can get out of nature the type of enjoyment which some people get from alcohol.

Interfused : Mixed up. Is it the life of God that is mixed up in nature?

Anchor to my purest thought : All his best thoughts were built on it.

Genial : Cheerful, happy.

My dearest friend : Refers to his sister Dorothy.

14

"Michael" belongs to the year 1800, and is one of the most harmonious of Wordsworth's poems. It has a poignant pathos and haunting melancholy.

"Michael" (1800) is a pastoral poem. "The sheepfold on which so much of the poem turns, remains, or rather the ruins of it. The character and circumstances of Luke were taken from a family to whom had belonged many years before, the house (Dove Cottage) we lived in at Town-End, along with some fields and woodlands on the eastern shore of Grasmere. The name of the Evening Star was not given to this house, but to another on the same side of the valley more to the north." (Wordsworth's note to Miss Fenwick).

In **"Michael"** Wordsworth's blank verse has such an easy flow that this, together with the intentional simplicity of language, in places reads like prose. Wordsworth is writing with such dignity, pathos, and restraint, that the poem never sinks into the merely humdrum.

Wordsworth set out to infuse into the new poetry which he wrote two notes. One was an intenser interest in nature and the

other a deeper faith in man. In a way he was something of a prophet. He interpreted nature in a new way and saw sublimity in familiar things. He saw in men of ordinary type much latent greatness. In 'Michael' he glorifies the humble and the lowly. Those of you who are interested should read his famous poem on childhood called "*The Immortality Ode*."

This is poem about country life and shows the strength of human affection. Wordsworth often chose subjects from humble village life. He did so deliberately because he believed that "among such people the essential passions of the heart find a better soil to mature in, and are more easily comprehended and more durable, are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent form of Nature and expressed in the simple language which hourly communion with Nature teaches." Thomas Hardy had the same views. Have you read any of his novels?

Michael is a peasant proprietor, a type whom Wordsworth knew well in his boyhood. The poem is a masterpiece of serious simplicity.

Tumultuous : Noisy, uproarious.

Pastoral : (Land) used for pasture.

Dell : A small valley usually with tree-clad side.

Straggling : Dispersed.

Homely : Simple, plain.

Frugal : Sparing (of food), economical.

South : The wind came from the South. The south wind.

Subterraneous : Under the earth. Since Michael lived in the mountains, the South seemed to him to come from under the earth (since it came from the valleys).

Stirring : Moving, active.

Mess of pottage : Mess is liquid or pulpy food. Pottage means soup. Liquid or mixed food.

Stirrings of inquietude : Anxiety (of Michael for his son).

Done him female service : Rocked his cradle, as we learn a few lines later.

Albeit : Although.

Coppice : Small trees grown for periodical cutting.

Sapling : A young tree.

Urchin : Boy (roughish or mischievous).

Blasts : Storms.

Emanations : Things issuing from a source (specially virtues, moral feelings, etc.).

Forfeiture : That which he had to give as penalty.

Patrimonial : Which he had inherited.

Resource : Means.

Diligent : Steady and hardworking.

Parish Boy : A boy who lived on the charity of the parish.

Jocund : Happy, merry.

Forthwith : At once.

Loth : Unwilling.

Mould : Poetical for grave.

Covenant : : Bargain, contract.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

(1772—1834)

(1) 1772—1794. Coleridge was born at Ottary St. Mary, Devonshire, on October 21, 1772. His father, a man of great learning but eccentric tastes, was the vicar and headmaster of the King's School there. He initiated his son into the mysteries of astronomy, and took him through a course of desultory reading. He died in 1781, leaving Coleridge to go as a sizar to Christ Hospital. He formed there a friendship with Elia (Charles Lamb), and early distinguished himself for his attractive disposition, versatility, and youthful enthusiasm. In 1791, he went to Jesus College, Cambridge, and became an ardent republican. In conjunction with Southey he was engrossed in a communistic scheme for the amelioration of his fellow men. In 1794, he left the university finally without taking a degree.

(2) 1795-1809. Soon after leaving Cambridge he married Sarah Frickers, a sister of Southey's wife. His republican ardour had by this time considerably cooled down. The Coleridges settled down first at Clevedon, and thereafter at Nether Stowey, Somerset, where he formed an intimate friendship with Wordsworth, and came under the wholesome influence of the great poet and his sister. The few months spent there were the best of his life: his domestic troubles had not yet commenced; his poetic imagination, though ethereal and æery from his very boyhood, had not yet lost its creative power. All the best work which is peculiarly his own belongs to this period. In 1798, appeared the famous 'Lyrical Ballads' to which he contributed '*The Ancient Mariner*'.

About this time he was rendered financially independent through the kindness of some friends, and started for a tour through Germany with the Wordsworths. German philosophy and literature peculiarly fascinated him; he was, perhaps, the first Englishman of letters completely to imbibe the spirit of German thought of the day, and to make it popular.

(3) 1800-1816. On his return to England in 1800, Coleridge aimlessly moved from place to place. During an illness some time before, he had started taking opium. The habit gradually grew upon him till its shadow darkened the remainder of his life. The days of his literary achievement were now over: he was simply planning, never executing.

Coleridge had a wonderful gift of speech. Partly through the persuasion of friends, partly to eke out his living, he started a series of lectures on Shakespeare and Milton. With his wonderful imagination and insight and felicitous use of language he always kept his audience enthralled.

His health was gradually failing, and he resolved to try the effects of warmer climates. He reached Malta in April 1804, and was well received by the English colony there. Later he was appointed Public Secretary of Malta and its dependencies. It is another proof of his remarkable versatility that he proved a thorough man of affairs and made his mark as secretary. The climate also suited him. But, cut off from friends and congenial intellectual environment, he found his life unbearable.

(4) 1816-1834 All this time he had been living in virtual separation from his wife and children. His friends were anxious that he should regain those exceptional powers which he had frittered away in dreams and fragments. He was, therefore, placed in the house of a surgeon, Mr. Gillman, under whose kind protection and treatment he passed the rest of his life.

During several lucid intervals he still gave proof of his great poetic power, subtle knowledge of psychology, and fine critical grasp of thought. 'Youth and Age', the charming songs in 'Zapolya' and 'Lay Sermons' belong to this period. He retained his wonderful hold on the minds of his contemporaries till the last.

His reputation and his fascinating gift of talk still brought young and old devotees of learning to his surgeon's residence in Highgate. Till his death in 1834, he never lost the poetic frenzy of his eye or the dreamy grace of his melodious speech.

The Ancient Mariner, Coleridge's contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads*, represents many aspects of his creative power at their best. Coleridge is not easily rivalled in the telling of a simple tale in verse, into whose design he can weave mystery, melody, and infinite suggestiveness and which may also reflect the subtlest working of the human mind. With the single exception perhaps of Shelley, he is the only poet who falls into a rapturous mood at a mental, as distinguished from an emotional, suggestion. His lyrics are not outbursts of emotion, but the wanderings of his langorous imagination into dreamland, coloured by the joy of his youth or the dejection of his later years.

His poems of nature, too, are descriptions of the real world affected by psychology. As in 'Frost at Midnight' or "The Ancient Mariner," he is moving in a dim supernatural world of his own soul or the soul of his ancient mariner. He had no doubt, powers of description and observation that might have made him a poet of pure nature greater even than Wordsworth or Shelly. And he gave us glimpses of these powers in "The Inscription for a Fountain on a Heath", and in two of his poems adapted from the German. But generally speaking, Coleridge's poems of nature are bathed in the amber light of his own imagination. But so close is his grasp of human psychology that this difference of treatment is seldom perceived. He brings the marvellous down to look like the natural with the same naturalness with which he raises the natural to heights where "the twain do meet", in the imagination of the reader already overwrought by the poet's manner of presentment.

His success in this respect is not a little due to the perfection of his language. From the simplest material of ordinary words he weaves a web of music and imagery. By slight, deft touches he creates a picture the details of which are quickly filled in by a responsive imagination. He is a master of harmony, so that by a skilful change here and there he creates new music out of metres worn out and hackneyed by years of poetic use. With that supreme art which ever seems artless, he weaves such a texture of sound, colour, and details as to defy all attempts at analysis.

15

This poem, written in February 1798, gives us the picture of an evening spent by the poet by his fireside on a frosty night. The mood of the poet is contemplative; memory floats into the poem and colours, with its pensive hue, the painting of nature. The

world of reality is far off; the poet is walking in a dreamland in which everything is seen bathed in "a low, soft moonlit night in a veiled music." His thoughts wander back to his own past or are projected forward to the future of his young child. The stillness of the night is maintained throughout the poem. Nowhere is its harmony disturbed by vehemence of thought. The metre, though Miltonic in structure, reflects the sweet, subdued mood of the poet.

This poem was produced probably under the influence of Wordsworth, and is important as an exposition of Coleridge's "view of nature."

Ministry : Office, function.

My cottage : the little cottage at Nether Stowey : he lived there from December 1796 to September 1798.

Solitude : It was only rarely and at night that Coleridge could obtain this much desired quiet and solitude.

Vexed meditation : Our mind is best concentrated by working in normal surroundings. The existence of anything unusual—not necessarily noise—disturbs the smooth working of the mind.

Film : A thin, light covering of flame on the fire.

Dim sympathies : Coleridge believed that the mind of man seeks only an image of itself in the objects of nature. It colours them bright or gloomy according to the character of its own thoughts. Very few things in nature have a fixed colour or shape of their own. They change from hour to hour according to the change in the feelings of the observer. See also 'Youth and Age' 11-30-40.

Companionable form : A living companion capable of understanding my thoughts and of sympathetically responding to them.

The idling Spirit : *i. e.*, the observer in an idle, contemplative mood.

Every where echo or mirror seeking of itself : A noticeable departure from Wordsworth's conception of the effect of nature on our thoughts. With him

nature is possessed of a conscious, ethical being of its own quite independent of what we are. Coleridge has, on more than one occasion, expressed the view here but vaguely indicated. Compare *Dejection : an Ode*, St. 4 (47-58).

O Lady ! we receive but what we give,
 And in our life alone doth Nature live :
 Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud !
 And would we aught behold, of higher worth.
 Than that inanimate cold world allowed
 To the poor loveless, ever anxious crowd,
 Ah ! from the soul itself must issue forth,
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
 Enveloping the Earth,
 And from the soul itself must there be sent
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element !

However, see note on l. 60 of this poem : it is to be remembered that Coleridge was at this time very much under the influence of Wordsworth.

School : Christ's Hospital. The "Blue Coat" School now at Horsham in Sussex.

Bars : Of the gate.

I dreamt : See biographical note, Section (1)

Articulate : The music of the bells was not meaningless. It spoke to the poet on things to come. (What does 'articulate' mean ?)

Stern Preceptor : His headmaster, Dr. Bowyer.

Aunt or sister : the aunt here, alluded to is probably Mrs. John Bowdan and his sister Anna.

Dear Babe : His son Hartley, of whom he was very proud. He suffered a great shock when later on Hartley was expelled from Oxford for intemperance. Also see Wordsworth : 'Immortality Ode', St. 6.

Image : Reflect.

Eternal language : An echo of Wordsworth's belief in nature's great influence in the formation of our character. God is revealed to us through the beautiful sights and sound of nature.

Himself in all : An expression of the Poet's belief in the presence of God in every object of nature. (An illustration of his so-called Pantheism).

Cf. Wordsworth : *Tintern Abbey*.

Something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things.

The redbreast : Like the Indian sparrow, the robin is a companionable bird visiting all homes in England especially in winter when its cheery chirp is most welcome.

Mossy : Covered with moss.

16

"*Christabel*" was published in 1816, though written between 1797 and 1800. "*Christabel*" is a fragment. Coleridge wrote, "The reason of my not finishing "*Christabel*" is not that I don't know to do it—for I have, as I always had, the whole plan entire from beginning to end in my mind, but I fear I could not carry on with equal success the execution of the idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one."

The poem, apart from introducing a new metre, is one of the most beautiful in English poetry. Coleridge did not finish this poem but he discussed its story with a friend. That friend says that Coleridge wished to continue the story as follows—"The following relation was to have occupied a third and fourth canto and to have closed the tale. Over the mountains, the Bard as directed by Sir Leoline, hastes with his disciple : but in consequence of one of those inundations supposed to be common to this country, the spot only where the castle once stood is discovered—the edifice itself being washed away. He determines to return. Geraldine, being acquainted with all that is passing, like the weird sisters in '*Macbeth*', vanishes. Reappearing, however,

s' awaits the return of the Bard, exciting in the meantime, by her wily arts, all the anger she could rouse in the Baron's breast as well as that jealousy to which he is described to have been susceptible. The old Bard and the youth at length arrive and therefore she can no longer personate the character of Geraldine, the daughter of Lord Roland de Vaux, but changes her appearance to that of the accepted though absent lover of Christabel. Now ensues a courtship most distressing to Christabel, who feels, she knows not why, great disgust for her once favoured Knight. This coldness is very painful to the Baron, who, has no more conception than herself of the supernatural transformation. She at last yields to her father's entreaties, and consents to approach the altar with the hated suitor. The real lover, returning enters at this moment, and produces the ring which she had once given him in sign of her betrothment. Thus defeated, the supernatural being Geraldine disappears. As predicted, the castle bell tolls, the mother's voice is heard and, to the exceeding great joy of the parties, the rightful marriage takes place, after which follows a reconciliation and explanation between the father and daughter.

Coleridge has left us a few great but unfinished poems. 'Kubla Khan' like 'Christabel' is unfinished. So one sometimes wonders how he finished the 'Ancient Mariner'. The atmosphere of 'Christabel' is of eerie mystery and horror. As you can see for yourself, part two is inferior to part one. Coleridge has the gift of making the supernatural appear convincing and real. He imagined the dramatic situations in which he placed characters. But the emotional reactions of these characters are convincing and true. If 'Christabel' had been completed, Coleridge, would have written an even greater poem than the 'Ancient Mariner'. The atmosphere of 'Christabel' is of the middle ages. There is the witch with evil spell and an innocent victim. The poem is meant to be a contrast between good and evil. Coleridge leaves many things in the poem deliberately vague. He suggests without defining. The horror is induced by the atmosphere in very simple words.

The metre of 'Christabel' is a revival of an old metre. Each line has four stresses divisible into two half lines of two stresses each. The alliteration is characteristic of English poetry.

Mastiff : A thick-set and powerful variety of dog much used as a watch-dog.

By shine and shower : Always, in all kinds of weather.

Weal : Welfare.

Bleak : Dull and cheerless.

Wan : Pale and sickly.

Forlorn : Left alone.

Palfrey : A saddle-horse, especially for a lady.

Amain : With all their force.

And once we crossed the shade of night : i. e. they rode the whole day
and the following night.

Wiz : I know.

Stout chivalry : strong horse-men.

Withal : With all the rest, moreover.

Moat : A trench filled with water, dug round a castle in the middle
ages.

The lady sank etc : This shows that Geraldine is an evil spirit.
She cannot cross the threshold which had
been blessed to keep out evil spirits.

Alas, alas etc : Geraldine does not praise the virgin because she
is an evil spirit.

Never till now etc : This shows that the dog barked because he had
a feeling that something evil had come.

Brands : Logs of wood.

A tongue of light etc : Even the fire behaved in a strange way.

Boss : Embossment, something raised on a shield.

Murky : Dark.

Rushes : Tall grass spread as a carpet.

Cordial : That which warms the heart and revives the spirits.

Friar : A monk.

Off etc. : This shows that Geraldine has the power to drive off the spirit of Christabel's mother. It is noteworthy that only the evil-hearted Geraldine sees the spirit of Christabel's mother. Compare this with *Macbeth* Act III Scene IV, line 91.

Peak and pine : Waste away as ghosts were supposed to do.

Wildered : Bewildered, amazed.

Requite : Rewards.

Cincture : Girdle.

Wel-a-day : Woe to the day.

Doleful : Sad.

Jagged : Uneven, with rough edges.

Bale : Woe, misfortune.

Train : Mountain pool.

A star hath set etc. : This means that it is the next morning. The star that has set is the morning star which sets at dawn. The star that has risen is the sun.

Part the Second

Matin : Morning. The church bell is rung in the morning for prayers.

Sacristain : A person in a church in charge of the sacred vessels and other movables.

Ween : think.

Pike : Peak, hill.

Ghyll : Valley or ravine with a stream running through it.

Tricks : Decorates.

Plight : Pleat, fold.

That He etc : Christ.

Alas : they had been etc : This stanza refers to Coleridge's quarrel with Southey. He regarded it as one of his most moving passages.

Wrath : Angry.

He swore by etc : When Christ was hung upon the cross some Roman soldiers pierced his side with a spear.

Trump : Trumpet.

Heraldry : Introduction as by a herald, proclamation.

Recreant : Cowardly.

Keened : Thought, regarded.

Trappings : Gay clothes, ornaments, especially those put on horses.

Hail : Shout of welcome.

Descry : See.

Askance : Sideways.

Austere : Harsh, hard.

A little child etc. : These lines do not fit in with the poem and seem to be part of a separate poem which has somehow got mixed up with this poem.

Limber : Flexible.

Dally : Play with.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

(1788—1824)

(1) 1788-1807. George Gordon Byron, sixth Lord Byron of Rochdale, was born in London on the 22nd of January, 1788. He came of a family the male members of which distinguished themselves by their eccentricity and lack of moderation in their pursuit of pleasure. His father, Captain John Byron, brother of the lord whose estates the poet inherited, had deserted his second wife after squandering away her fortune. She was herself a capricious woman of violent temper with no fitness for educating

a son, who was left on her hands with but scanty means of livelihood. She retired to Aberdeen, where the poet's early life was mostly passed. In 1798 they returned to England on Byron's succeeding to the family title and estates. The poet, who had started his formal education at a free school in Aberdeen, was sent to Dulwich whence he passed on to Harrow in 1801, and to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1805. He did not employ his time usefully either at school or at the university. For the two years he was at Cambridge, he made himself conspicuous only for his reckless ways and inordinately foolish conduct.

(2) 1807-1812. His first work, *Hours of Idleness*, is a book devoid of any merit or promise. It was savagely criticised by 'The Edinburgh Review'. Byron published in the following year a rejoinder, 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers'. It was a capital imitation of the satires of Pope; the young author spared neither contemporary poets nor critics in his bitter onslaught. The same year he settled down at Newstead Abbey the family seat, and contemplated an active political life. The wildness of his own nature and extravagance of his constant companions made a life of strenuous exertion impossible. In June, 1809, he left England, and after some time spent in Malta and Spain, he went to Greece and the Aegean. These two years or more of travel made Byron bring out, by the novelty of experience, strong and original faculties. During his travels he had written the first two cantos of 'Childe Harold,' which were published in 1812 and became immediately popular.

(3) 1812-1816. During these years Byron was the darling of society, and object of the maddest devotion from women. He followed up his poetic success with a series of short tales, or Eastern Romances in Verse, the better known of which are: "The Giaour" 'The Corsair', 'Lara' and 'The Siege of Corinth'. Though partially an imitation of Scott's *Lays*, they ousted all rivals in the field by capturing the imagination of readers through the novelty of their subject matter and the intensity of their passion, and also perhaps through their absolute disregard of all conventions of society or ethics. In 1815, Byron married a lady of fortune, Anne Isabella Milbanke. After twelve months of married life, and a birth of a daughter, Augusta Ada, Lady Byron left her husband without any apparent or commonly known reason. The society which had almost worshipped Byron now hooted him down. The poet, too disgusted and proud to defend himself, too puzzled and astonished to take everything with indifference, left England which he had never really liked, because of the dullness and monotony of its conventional ways.

(4) 1816-1824. Travelling through Belgium up the Rhine, he joined the Shelleys in Switzerland. He wintered in Venice, where he formed a connection with Jane Clairemont, Godwin's step-daugh-

ter, and poetically came under the influence of Shelley's more refined and dominant personality. Venice was his headquarters for the following two years, and it was here that he met an Italian countess through whom he became connected with the Revolutionary party. In 1822 he was living in Genoa when the Greek insurrection against the tyrannous rule of the Turks began. In July 1823 Byron set out to join this movement for recovering the independence of Greece. He spent weary months in trying to get into active work in the island of Iona, not landing in Missolonghi till January 1824. Here he was disturbed by a disunion among the Greeks, and tired of his generous enthusiasm. He caught the pneumatic fever, and died on April 19, 1824; thus expiating by his heroic death many a deed that had brought him only obloquy and shame.

Byron excels most other poets of England in the reputation he enjoys on the Continent. His poetry voices the many moods of the spirits of Revolution, which captured both the reason and the imagination of Europe in the earlier years of the last century. His unyielding, colossal personality, seeking impassioned self-description and vehement self-assertions, contributed to impress Europe with his power. He broke loose from all conventions of society whose laws he disregarded with haughty disdain, and whose feelings he outraged by turning the whole world into an open confessional. His lyrics became the revelation of a soul tortured by remorse, but hardly ashamed of its contact with wickedness. His mind surveyed the foibles of European society from end to end; and levelled against it hard, almost brutal, satire. His courage, his frankness, his passionate concern for them gave his contemporaries another proof of his power and inexhaustible energy. He became a source of strength and inspiration to the nations of Europe because of passionate devotion to liberty, his interest in the past glories of Italy and Greece, the prophetic outburst that "blood will be shed like water, and tears like mist, but people will conquer in the end."

But England is a conservative country, difficult to shake in its prejudices, social, political, or even literary. The Byronic influence failed there because of its very strength, unconventionality and revolutionary tendencies. Carlyle was only voicing the sentiment of a generation of Englishmen when he advised them to close their Byron and open their Goethe. No generation can thrive on the poetry of social hate and the idealisation of revolt.

Besides this natural reaction against a force destructive of the foundations of society there is the change in literary fashions to be reckoned with. With Dickens and Thackeray the novel takes over the field explored by the poetry of Byron. The novelists

have not the same force and frankness in their mockery, it is true. But the Victorians preferred mild to forceful expression, cynical insinuation to brutal satire. In point of style, too, Byron was not of his generation. He admired Pope, and probably owed to the eighteenth century his linking for an exact and sometimes colourless use of poetic language.

The essential interest of Byron's poetry still abides, at least for some of us. In an age in which the poet habitually dwelt in a world removed from the everyday life of men, Byron is never moved by the strength of his passion ; or the depth of his contemplation ; quite away from the round earth, and the civil animal who dwells upon it. His best work impresses us by the sheer force of his poetic imagination, which reaches its highest level stirred by "an energetic interest in real transaction," and from them derives an ecstasy of emotion which in more spiritual natures is the result of contemplation of the vast infinitudes that compass the human soul. His interest in beauty is not so keen as his interest in human affairs. But this does not imply any deficiency in poetic quality. In dealing with man he may betray an ignorance of the subtleties of psychology or a lack of understanding of the profound truths of morality. But he is the dazzling master of the grand human passions that stir up to do heroic deeds. He can raise a hurricane of emotion, and triumphantly ride the storm. His reasonableness and self-control do not desert him even in the most turbulent moods.

Except when he is under the influence of Shelley or Wordsworth, he views nature as a background for the display of the tragedy of man. He passes through nature unobservant of her minute or hidden qualities. He is not a master of the telling phrase that reveals a beauty that lay undiscovered before it flashed upon the poet's mind. This lack of the higher imagination in his observation of nature makes his descriptions graphic and sketchy, lacking that fulness and richness of tone and colour which we associate with the landscapes of Tennyson and Shelley.

Byron's lack of ear is apparent even to a foreign student of his poetry. He has rhetoric and declamation, and sometimes a kind of recitative chant, but of real music he shows himself deficient except in half a dozen lyrics. He is a singer by chance, his lyrics are seldom the inevitable expression of a mood. But of a different kind of lyric he is the master, the kind that receives its charm from the understanding and not the emotions, the lyric, in which argument and exposition blend themselves, with sentiment. His choice of words influenced by their definiteness ; his language fails to create that atmosphere which implies a whole world of associated images. In this, as in qualities already pointed out, he has strong affinity with the eighteenth century poetry.

This poem was published in 1816, when Byron had finally left England and joined the Shelleys in Switzerland. It is finer in workmanship than the Eastern tales he had already published, and indicates getting away from the influence of Scott, and coming under the sway, specially in style and diction, of Wordsworth and Colreidge. Shelley was himself passing through a Wordsworthian phase at this period. The tale shows power rather than art, strength in the utterances of passionate sensation without any subtle touches of psychological or dramatic portrayal of strong human emotions. There is plenty of action and colour; the narrative rushes on or lingers according as the poet wishes to rouse our imagination or to move us with pathos.

Closely considered, '*The Prisoner*' is less a tale than a monologue in which the poet himself speaks in reminiscence. His imagination is moved, at the mere sight of the prison, facts are invented, and "the high temper and lofty tenderness" of the poet creates a tale tinged with his own emotion.

The story is supposed to be founded on historical facts but the poet was not familiar with them till after the composition of the poem.

The prisoner is supposed to be Bonnivard, but there is nothing common between him and Byron's hero, except that they were both imprisoned in Chillon. Francis de Bonnivard (1493-1570), was a younger son of a wealthy family. In 1513, he became prior of St. Victor at Geneva. He fell under the suspicion of the Duke of Savoy, and was kept a prisoner by him during 1519-20. In 1530 he was again seized and taken to the castle of Chillon at the east end of the Lake of Geneva, where he remained a prisoner for six years. On the capture of Chillon by the Bernese and Genevese, in 1536 he returned to Geneva and received a pension in lieu of his priory. He wrote several works of historical nature. He suffered for his political opinions, not "for his father's faith."

As men's have grown etc. Ludovico Sforza and others. The same is asserted of Marie Antoinette's, the wife of Louis the Sixteenth, though not in quite so short a period. Grief is said to have had the same effect; to such, and not to fear this change in her was to be attributed to Byron.

Spoil: Injury. In addition to the usual meaning this older sense of the word seems to be indicated here. See I Henry I, III iii, II.

Company : Villainous company, hath been the spoil of me.

Bann'd : Forbidden, interdicted. Byron uses the word in a slightly unusual sense. "It is commonly used of Persons, here it is used of things" (Hales). When applied to persons it means proclaimed an outlaw, excommunicated.

This etc. : "There seems some carelessness of style here, such as often marks Byron's writings. This should be it, or l. 12 should be omitted altogether. As the text stands l. 12 is pleonastic."—Hales.

We were seven : An imaginary number ; Bonnivard was imprisoned alone.

Their belief with blood etc : Died to prove their faith. Seal is used in the applied sense of reality, confirm.

Gothic mould : Of Gothic form or shape. Cf Pope : 'Crowned with an architrave of antique mould.'

Massy : Massive, solid, weighty. Cf. Milton *Il Penseroso*, 'With antick pillars massy proof.'

Hales quotes from Murray's etc.

"It is lighted by several windows through which the sun's light passes by reflection from the surface of the lake up to the roof, transmitting partly also the blue colour of the waters. The dungeon of Bonnivard is airy and spacious, consisting of two aisles almost like the crypt of a church."

So : Is intensive here.

Marsh's meter lamp : Ignis fatuus, will-o'-the-wisp.
See note to "O, Brignall banks" etc. 4. 51.

Cankering : Causing disease or decay. Canker is the same word as cancer, though used in very different senses in modern English.

Score : What is the derivation of this word ?

But : What is the function of 'but' here ?

Fetter'd : Fetters are strictly footshackles and manacles shackles for the hands, but both fetters and manacles are used in a quite general way.

In the dearth etc : In the absence of pure air and sunshine.

I ought to do : It was my duty. Ought :—owed, and is used here in that sense. See note '*Harp of the North*' l. 4. and compare the difference in meaning of 'went' and 'wended.'

Below : On earth.

Had stood : Would have stood ; if he had the opportunity.

But not in chains : Supply "form'd" from l. 93 above.

In sooth : Truly. Sooth : truth. Survives in 'soothsayer.'

Gulf : A wide separation from his healthy pastimes ; literally, a deep chasm.

Lake Lemman : See '*Childe Harold*' (orig. Canto III).

Inthrals : encircles ; controls the flow of.

Wanton : Undisciplined. unrestrained. The sense of the word is generally poetic. More commonly, Wanton : dissolute, or lustful.

The like : For such food.

Care : Worry, anxiety. We were not troubled on that account.

Many a thousand years : We generally say 'many a man,' 'many a place' etc; that is, we regard 'many a' as a phrase that governs a singular noun, the plurality being implied in the adjective 'many'. The obvious reason why the poet uses years and not year is the exigency of rhyming with 'tears' in the line above; but a justification may be found for this usage by regarding 'thousand years' as a collective unit of time.

Pant : P. P. of 'pen' to shut in or shut up, as in a pen—an enclosure for cows, sheep, poultry, etc.

Had grown : would have grown. Cf. l. 95.

Gnash : "This word is no doubt an onomatopoeia, expressing the sound made by striking or clashing the upper-jaw teeth against those of the lower jaw ; here it seems to mean to break by violent bitings—by clashing the teeth fiercely and madly against the chain ; to crush with the teeth, to crunch furiously, as one might say of a lion."
—Hales.

In twain : used only in poetry.

Cold : bear in mind that 'cold' also means cruel, unfeeling and unkind.

Corse : archaic and poetic form of 'corpse.'

Wrought : worked incessantly. 'Worked' and 'wrought' are both the past tense of work, used in different senses. What are they ?

Coldly : with indifference, unfeelingly.

Empty chain : a very bold and effective touch. We cannot generally speak of an empty chain, or of an empty rope. But to the speaker, the chain has, by long association, become a receptacle for the hands so dearly loved by him. The place where it loosely hangs now appears to him empty.

Was withered : was by force or action of man made to wither ; distinguish from 'wither'd on the stalk' which would imply decay in the usual course of nature.

Sin : l Cf. 120. Persecution ; note an occasional tendency to personify an abstract quality with a view to emphasise. 'Sin' for 'sinner.'

Those he left behind. Hales calls attention to the delicacy implied in the plural. By such a fanciful multiplying of the survivors the elder brother prevents self-intrusion ; himself

and his loneliness are, as it were, kept out of sight and forgotten. The grief is softened by vagueness.

An eye, etc. : connect with, all the while l. 190.

Frantic : frenzied.

A selfish death : suicide : his belief in a life to come saves him from an act that will release him from all earthly pain, but jeopardise the welfare of his soul.

Stanza ix : perhaps the best stanza in the poem. Only those aspects of his apathetic state are described, of which he himself would be conscious. The poet skillfully escapes the error of describing the prisoner and his feelings objectively, and suits his style to the broken speech of a man in his state of mind.

Cf. ll. 50 and 55, l. 205 : here the antithesis does not strike one as being artificial or out of place.

Heavy : with grief overcome and dulled with weariness. See *Matth.* xxvi. 43, "Their eyes were heavy."

Late : lately, recently.

Lone as solitary cloud : (Cf. *Childe Harold* st. 8 orig. Canto III st. xcii), for description of a different aspect of the sky. Like Shelley, Byron was a lover of the sea, cloud and storm.

Inured : used to, hardened.

It was : What does 'it' refer to ?

Sire : father, now used generally in formal address to a king.

Had made : would have made. Cf. l. 95 etc.

The quiet of a loving eye : A thoroughly Wordsworthian line. Wordsworth believed the love of nature to be a tie that binds us to life, and creates for us an interest in it. To this view Byron subscribes whole-heartedly in this poem, and in '*Childe Harold*' Canto III, to some extent. In '*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*,' however

he had some very uncharitable things to say of Wordsworth's interest in common things, and of his simple diction, though the same interest in common things and the same simple diction borrowed from everyday speech of common men are freely employed by him. Also see '*Life*' for remarks on his view of nature and on his choice of words.

Heavy : Oppressive, unbearable. Cf. I. Sam. v. 6 :

'The hand of the Lord was heavy upon them.'

Sullen : slow-moving.

Trade : occupation.

18

These stanzas are taken from "*Childe Harold*" Canto IV. Byron loved the energy of nature and that comes out again and again in his descriptions of the storm, the ocean when it is agitated, mountain torrents etc. There is a certain amount of meditative musing in his descriptions though he never goes deep into the mystery of nature as Wordsworth did. Nature for him is a background for the activities of man and it is in man only that he is interested. Goethe said truly of him : 'The moment he reflects he is a child.'

Ravage : Ruin, destruction.

Lay : 'Lay' is used for 'lie' for the sake of rhyme. Byron was criticised for this indefensible solecism—using Lay as intransitive verb.

Thunderstrike : Strike with thunder i. e., cannonade.

Leviathan : Sea-monster. Oak leviathan—huge ship,

Their clay creator :—Man (since he is made of clay.)

Yeast of waves : Yeast is a yellow substance used in brewing beer, making wine and raising bread ; yeast in waves means seething, surging waves (seething and surging like yeast).

The Armada's Pride : refers to the Spanish Armada and how it was destroyed by a tempest.

Or : and.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

(1792—1822)

Shelley was educated at Eton and University College, Oxford. From Oxford he was sent down in 1811 after circulating a pamphlet called *The Necessity of Atheism*. In the same year he married Harriet Westbrook, who was aged sixteen, and from whom he separated after three years of a wandering life. He left England with Mary Godwin, to whom he was married after the unhappy Harriet had, in 1816, drowned herself in the Serpentine. On 8 July, 1822, he was drowned, while sailing near Spezzia (off the Italian coast).

The note of revolt is present in the poetry of Shelley from the beginning. He was nurtured on the political and social philosophy of William Godwin, who had advocated extreme individualism and ethical determinism. In his early period Shelley wrote *The Revolt of Islam* and *Queen Mab*, the latter of which works is very extravagant in construction and proclaims the Godwinian doctrines through the mouth of mythical personages. But the poem has a passionate sincerity and even in its immaturity and irregularity gives the promise of genius. Such work, however, brought Shelley an undeserved reputation of being an atheist, which reputation clung to him throughout life. Shelley, while he did not believe in formal creeds, was a man inspired by high ethical and humanitarian ideals and was deeply spiritual in outlook. His growing dissatisfaction with the condition of England in his day was expressed in a large number of lyrics and longer poems. The idealist—the revolutionary such is the character which is in evidence in these compositions. *Alastor* is the tragedy of the idealist who finds himself forlorn in the world where there is nothing but 'cold despair and pale tranquillity.' But it would be wrong to carry away the impression that Shelley was for any length of time a frustrated and disappointed idealist, fretting against the injustice and tyranny of the world in vain. He was, on the contrary, a man who had the strongest faith in the power of love and the soul to overthrow the forces of tyranny. In *Laon and Cythna*, which later was renamed *The Revolt of Islam*, no persecution or torture can defeat the noble determination of the hero and heroine. Greater still is this note in *Prometheus Unbound*, a story based upon the ancient Greek myth of the Titan who stole fire from heaven for the benefit of man and was chained upon a rock to be eternally tortured. In Shelley's drama this story is given a new orientation, and becomes the symbol of the struggle of man for freedom from tyranny. Jupiter, the persecutor of Prometheus, is the symbol of tyranny. The hero, Prometheus, stands for boundless love and sublime Christ-like suffering. Prometheus' faith overthrows Jupiter from his throne, and this is a symbol of the defeat of man's evil nature. It is thus that Prometheus is 'unbound'. While in lyrics like *Men of England* and *The Great Age of the World* this passion for liberty is expressed on a somewhat less exalted plane, there is the expression of faith in the triumph of the spirit over death in *Adonais*, his elegy over the death of the young Keats.

Shelley's entire work is interpenetrated with the passion for the spiritual and the ideal. The feeling of love in his work is spiritualized and intellectualized so that it becomes an expression of primal sympathy, of the quest by the human soul for its mate over the wide universe. This feeling develops into mysticism, such as is evidenced in *Epipsychidion*, the story of a beautiful sister-soul imprisoned, symbol of the suffering of man's spirit in the midst of enveloping grossness. This element of spiritualized passion, coupled with the note of revolt, gives to Shelley's work an aspiration, a sensitiveness which in their subtlety and tremulousness are equalled in no other poet. A vibrating sensibility, mystical desire, the languished pangs and spiritual raptures transcend anything which ordinary mankind can feel. In the deeply searching language of *Cazamian*, the unattainable aim of these efforts is the impossible return of individual life to the whole, with which the poet's thrilling intuition seizes his essential kinship. Pantheism is here a living faith, ardently realized through direct knowledge, at the same time as it is conceived by reason. A divine immanence sheds its rays throughout the universe, illuminating from within the heaviest mass of matter : everything is light, just as everything is life ; but at the very core of things Shelley's idealism puts love, and Plato is equally his master with Spinoza.

9

The best of the few sonnets that Shelley wrote.

'Ozymandias' is a Greek form of an Egyptian name. Shelley probably invented the inscription.

8. 'Hand' and 'heart' are governed by 'survive'. We can still read the king's scorn and the sculptor's impression of him though the King and the sculptor have passed away.

20

This is an extract from Shelley's great lyrical drama, "*Prometheus Unbound*" (1840). Prometheus, according to Greek mythology, stole fire for man from the chariot of the sun, and was punished by Zeus. Prometheus was chained to a rock on Mt. Caucasus, where during the day-time a vulture fed on his liver, which was restored each succeeding night. From this torture Prometheus was delivered by Hercules. To Prometheus mankind was believed to be indebted for many useful arts. Shelley speaks of Prometheus as a deliverer, as a liberator of humanity from the tyranny of the gods. This lyric is sung by the spirits of the Air, at a moment in the Drama when the nobler spirit-characters, Asia Panthea, and

the Spirit of the Hours are taking a journey through the air, and their car (charriot) pauses within a cloud on the top of a snowy mountain.

Note the oriental touch in such phrases as 'Life of Life', and 'Lamp of Earth.' To a mind like Shelley's there was perhaps a feeling of kinship with the spiritual East. This lyric reads almost like Persian *ghazal*.

21

Shelley's own note on this poem is : "This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Avno, near Florence. and on a day when that tempestuous winds, whose *temperature* is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the cis-alpine regions."

The verse sweeps along with the elemental rush of the wind it celebrates. Metaphor succeeds to metaphor, and simile to simile, with wild rapidity ; but though at a first reading it is hardly possible to keep pace with the swift kaleidoscopic changes, there is none of the hazy indistinctness that is apt to mar the same poet's less perfect work.

This ode is most characteristic of Shelley's revolutionary favour and his idealism : and is a masterpiece of lyric art.

The sweep and flow of the verse in this poem has something of the force and tempestuous rush of the west wind itself. Nowhere does the torrent of similes, metaphors and symbols, pause for a moment, or is there any feeling of arrested speed or descent to the common place. Each one of five fourteen-line stanzas is a perfect piece of invocation, and full-throated passionate prayer. Immediately as one note on the chord reaches its culmination, a finger of almost divine skilfulness begins to sweep the next and on and on.

In the first three stanzas is the praise of the West Wind, the great symbol of force and power, of its destructive and creative might, of Shakti. In the first stanza the Wind is the destroyer of leaves and of seeds which, are buried under the earth in autumn and in winter to be regenerated in spring, when it will be filled with living hues and odours plain and hill. In the second, this praise and invocation is continued with the change-over to the description of the Wind as bringer of clouds, vapours, rain, hail and lightning, with the mighty image continued over three of the most highly imaginative lines in poetry of the vapour on the closing night of the

year being

'the done of a vast sepulchre.

Vaulted with all thy congregated might...'

In the third stanza the praise and description of the Wind as the source of power and might rises to a crescendo, with the twin images, of the exertion of the force of the wind, first on the blue 'Mediterranean' and then on the still mightier Atlantic, 'whose level powers' in the path of the wind cleave themselves into chasms and which is shaken to its very distant depths for

'.....far below

The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which bear

The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice.....'

After the full-throated tribute of praise he now addresses his prayer to wind. This is an outpouring of his anguish and suffering—the torture borne by the spiritual idealist in a world of gross indifference—which culminates almost into a shriek of agony in the image.

'I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !'

In the last stanza of all comes the mighty prophecy of Hope and Faith in the triumph of love and the spirit over tyranny and the forces of darkness, which faith is in evidence in the *Revolt of Islam*, in *Prometheus Unbound* and elsewhere in his work. This prophecy is the message to man of a glorious future, of the re-birth of the soul.

'If winter comes, can spring be far behind ?'

This lyric in its structure and imagery and in the expression of exalted spiritual rapture is the greatest of the lyrics of Shelley. There is nothing like its force and power and its tidal waves of rising inspiration in the language.

According to *The Cambridge History of English Literature* this ode 'originates directly in that impassioned intuition which is the first condition of poetry ; the wild autumn wind sweeping through the forest possesses his imagination and becomes a living symbol of the spiritual forces which regenerate the fading or decadent life of nations, bring succour and 'alliance' to forlorn heroic spirits, and scatter their burning words, 'like ashes from an unextinguished hearth' among mankind. Nowhere does Shelley's voice reach a more poignantly personal note or more perfect spontaneity. Yet, this ode is no less his masterpiece in

calculated symmetry of structure, matching here the artistry of Keats' *Grecian Urn* or *Autumn*. The "Titan in virgin's form" (as Leopardi called him) finds consummate utterance in this great song, where we hear together the forlorn wail and the prophetic trumpet-blast.

Maenad : The name given to female votaries of Bacchus or Dionysus :

'the frenzied ones.,

Baiae : On the coast of Campania, at the Western end of the bay of Nabb's : a favourite resort of the ancient Romans, was destroyed by an eruption of the Vesuvius.

Pumice isle : formed by deposits of lava from the Vesuvius.

Cozy : moist.

Grow grey with fear and despoil themselves :

Shelley's note on this is : "The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well-known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes sympathises with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it."

Hectic : The red colour in the cheeks of a person having fever accompanying consumption and other wasting diseases.

Clarion : A trumpet. The allusion is to the trumpet to be blown by the Angel on the Day of Judgment whose sound will destroy the earth and all that is alive on it.

Angel : Here used in the original sense of 'messenger'.

Zenith : The highest point of the sky as apparent to the beholder.

Intenser day : The bright light as reflected within the water.

Quicken : to make alive or quick, the original use of the word.

"The cry is prophetic of that unconquerable hope for mankind which, underlying the greater part of Shelley's poetry, has made half its influence upon the world." (Stopford A. Brooke).

JOHN KEATS

(1795—1821)

Keats was the son of a livery-stable keeper. He did not have that advantage of high university education which some of his great contemporaries had, but he did acquire some knowledge of Latin and French, though not of Greek. This is remarkable in view of the fact of his intuitive understanding and appreciation of the Greek spirit which as reflected in his great poems with the Greek background *Endymion*, *Hyperion* and *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. He received training as a surgeon from the age of fifteen to twenty-one, and passed with credit as a licentiate in that profession. Soon after, however, he showed signs of consumption, which soon developed. A reflective habit of mind, a somewhat tragic experience, disappointment in love, all combined to hasten his end, which came in 1821, at the age of twenty-six. He died in Rome, having gone to Italy in the September of 1820, as he felt that in his state of health the severity of an English winter would surely kill him. The end came in Rome, on the 23rd February in 1821. He was buried in the English cemetery there, and the epitaph on his grave, devised by himself, runs, 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water.'

The achievement of John Keats, apart from its extraordinarily great intrinsic excellence, compels wonder all the more when it is realized that he died only in his twenty-sixth year, and that all his great work was done in a period of about four years. Yet this youth, in the opinion of some, the greatest among the younger group of Romantic poets, left behind him a volume of verse which has suggestions in it of the greatness of Shakespeare and Milton.

In an estimate of the genius of Keats, Henry Ellershaw says: "Of the five great English poets living in the second decade of the nineteenth century, John Keats was the latest born and the first to die. Unlike the rest of them he had no advantage either in birth or education; but though his opportunities were slight and his allotted span of life short by force of genius, in four brief years he had triumphed over all obstacles, and wrung from the world the acknowledgement of his right to a place among the great poets not only of his own, but of any country and had extorted even from Byron the admission that *Hyperion* was as sublime "as Aeschylus".

The Cambridge History sums up the greatness of his achievement in this high tribute: "...in the imaginative intensity of single phrases, no English poet has come nearer to Shakespeare or oftener recalls him...and, in *Hyperion*, he showed himself master not only of a poetic speech for which no theme was too noble or too great, but a power of construction by no

means to be explained by the great examples he had before him. It would be rash to say what in poetry would have been beyond the reach of one who, at twenty-five, compels the comparison with Shakespeare and Milton, and yet, deeply as he came under their spell, was lifted by their genius only into more complete possession of his own."

On this last point of Keats' mastery of the comprehensive-ness and richness of expression which is most deeply characteristic of Shakespeare, Robert Bridges has thus analysed Keats' creative power: "In these detached criticisms many of the main qualities of Keats' poetry have been incidentally brought out; there is one, as yet unmentioned, which claims the first place in a general description, and that is the very seal of his poetic birthright, the highest gift of all in poetry, that which sets poetry above the other arts; I mean the power of concentrating all the far-reaching resources of language on one point, so that a single and apparently effortless expression rejoices the aesthetic imagination at the moment when it is most expectant and exacting and at the same time astonishes the intellect with a new aspect of truth. This is only found in the greatest poets, and is rare in them; and it is no doubt for the possession of this power that Keats has been often likened to Shakespeare, and very justly, for Shakespeare is of all poets the greatest master of it; the difference between them here is that Keats' intellect does not supply the second factor in the proportion or degree that Shakespeare does, indeed, it is chiefly when he is dealing with material and sensuous subjects that his poems afford illustrations but these are as far as they go, not only like Shakespeare, but often as good as Shakespeare when he happens to be confining himself to the same limited field. Examples from Shakespeare are such well-known sayings as these:—

'My way of life
Is fal'n into the sear, the yellow leaf.'—*Macbeth*.
'Lay not that flattering unction to your soul.'—*Hamlet*.
'We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life.
Is rounded with a sleep'.—*Tempest*.

Examples from Keats are:—

'The journey homeward to habitual self.'
'Solitary thinkings; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven.'
'My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams.'

On a first study, Keats' work gives the impression of being deeply pictorial and sensuous, in which the voluptuous enjoyment of the senses is expressed with the highest intensity of rapture. Keats is, like Spenser, perhaps the greatest master of colour and form in English poetry ; and pieces such as *Eve of St. Agnes* *Autumn*, the opening lines of *Endymion* and *Ode on the Grecian Urn* provide a feast for the senses such as is rarely, if ever, to be met with in poetry. But to describe him as one in whose poetry there is matter directed only towards the satisfaction of the sensuous impulse, would be to take an extremely limited and unduly superficial view. Keats is no doubt something of a worshipper of the cult of Beauty—Beauty which in some obscure phase of his mystical experience, 'not easy to realize or express, becomes synonymous with Truth. There is also the suggestion broadcast in Keats' work that he is something of an 'escapist' which by definition every Romantic is expected to be—one who seeks a heaven of rest from 'the weariness, the fever and the 'fret' of life in the contemplation of Beauty, of the restfulness and imperishableness of artistic creation and the joy of those forms of nature which bring things of Beauty, which are 'a joy for ever'. Led on in this quest of 'escape' and beauty Keats enters into the grandeur and perfection of experience of the early Greek myth and the remotely alluring romance and mystery of medieval ballad.

But, there is in Keats another element also present. This is a shaping philosophy of life, an eager quest after the principle of life in which the mind, thirsting after the perfection of experience should be able to find rest. Keats is perceived to have been groping his way to such a principle; when prematurely death snatched him away. In poems like *Sleep and Poetry* and *Hyperion* there are clear hints of certain settled philosophic convictions. In *Sleep and Poetry* we come upon :

"And can I ever bid these joys farewell?
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life
Where I may find the agonies, the strife
Of human hearts.....!"

Later in the same poem is this :—

"But strength alone though of the muses born
Is like a fallen angel—...—forgetting the great end
Of poesy, that it should be a friend
To soothe the cares and lift the thoughts of men."

In *Hyperion* this principle is enunciated :—

"So, on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty born of us
And fated to excel us as we pass.

In glory that *old* Darkness ;
for 'tis the eternal law
 That first in beauty should be first in might."

Nevertheless, what most is the characteristic of Keats for the common reader is the supreme pictorial quality the mighty rapture of the senses and the *overlying* haunting tragic sense of the 'weariness, fret and fever' of the *Nightingale Ode*, and 'the burning forehead, and a parching tongue' of *The Grecian Urn*—a feeling essentially 'romantic' in nature.

22

Written not later than January, 1818, soon after the completion of "*Endymion*," the most Shakespearean of the sonnets of Keats—'Shakespearean work it is, not imitative of Shakespeare but having that rounded perfection and felicity of loveliness of which Shakespeare is the great master.'

The greatness of the thought in this sonnet should be borne in mind by those who are tempted to judge Keats unreasonably because of some lapses in his poetry and in his letters to Fanny Brawne.

The haunting sense of unfulfilment in life, is expressed in an image of utter loneliness. Then on the shore of this wide world I stand alone.....make this sonnet the most deeply tragic expression of the terror of utter effacement of the human personality by premature death.

For sheer miraculous constructive power, which carries it in one uninterrupted flow from the opening to its close, and for rich expressive phrases such as, 'huge cloudy symbols of a high romance' and the magic hand of chance' not much in the sonnets of Shakespeare even can be said to rise to the same height of artistic achievement as this sonnet.

Charactry : His own hand.

Huge cloudy symbols of high romance : A phrase the sense of which can only be apprehended but never fully expressed. Here notice the many-faceted, inexhaustible richness of expression.

Magic hand of chance : Poetic inspiration which obeys no law, and is as unteachable, as it is unpredictable, and is altogether of the nature of the miraculous.

Unreflecting : Love which is sheer passion and devotion.

: Magical.

One of the themes of romantic poetry is 'the fatal woman,' the type of female whose dangerous seductiveness is divorced altogether from morality and is destructive to the soul and mind. This type has exercised eternal fascination on the human mind, just as has its counterpart, 'the demoniac man.' Lamia is such another 'fatal woman,' in Keats as is Geraldine in Coleridge's *Christabel*. The medieval atmosphere, the mystery, and sheer terror of this tale told with the utmost restraint and bare of all descriptive ornament is one of the finest expressions of that most important aspect of Romanticism, its interest in deep tragedy and mystery.

The reticence, the effect of atmosphere in the repetition of such lines as

'The sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing'

is noticeable in its calculated artistry.

Says Ellershaw in appreciation of the effect of this poem.

"As the *Eve of St. Agnes* represents the glowing spirit of romance, so this is a perfect example of restraint both in language and sentiment. But it stirs the spirit to respond in a way in which the longer and more cloying poem does not. Between the two there is a difference similar to that between the perfumes of musk and lavender. The poem is an example of the highest tragic imagination."

Palely : Used as an adjective, an epithet of the knight.

And no birds sing : Very simple monosyllables producing a tremendous effect—characteristic of a great poet.

Woe begone : 'encompassed' by woe.

Zone : girdle.

Manna dew : The substance miraculously supplied to the Israelites by the Lord. Divine food.

Elfin : is the adjective from 'elf', a little sprite, often used as a substantive.

Latest : not simply 'last' but with an allusion to the fact—doubtless familiar to Keats as a medical student—that vitality is lowest in the hours just before dawn.

"Written in the spring of 1819, and one of the six or eight among his poems so unique and perfect in style, that it is hard to see how any experience could have improved them."

"The Ode was inspired by the song of a nightingale that had built its nest close to the house of a friend in Hampstead. The bird's song, we are told, often threw Keats into a sort of trance of tranquil pleasure. One morning he took his chair from the breakfast table, placed it on the grass-plot under a plum tree, and sat there for two or three hours with some scraps of paper in his hands. Thus the Ode was written."

In this Ode is present the keen sense of the tragedy and forlorn-ness of life, where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, 'where men sit and hear each other groan' 'and where youth grows pale and spectre-thin and dies.' From this oppressive feeling a refuge is found in the rapturous song of the Nightingale singing in full throated ease.' The tempo of this rapturous feeling becomes quicker and quicker, till it carries the poet quite out of the confines of ordinary human experience into the contemplation of delicious romantic death 'to cease upon the midnight (with no pain) and in a flight of high romantic fancy to 'charmed magic casements, opening on the foam of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn.' But 'escape' fails and the magic of the song of the Nightingale dissolves like all such props of the sorrow-laden soul. Fancy can no longer cheat, and he is tolled back to his sole self.

Notice the perfect structure of this poem, with each of the stanzas composed of ten lines packed with rich, expressive phrases. Its irresistible flow and music of words give it such a marvellous character of spontaneity, like the music of the Nightingale itself, with its full-throated ease; but a study of the manuscript of the poet shows important emendations before the miracle of the present form was finally achieved.

Drains : Dregs.

Lethe : the river of forgetfulness in Hades (under-world), in ancient Greek mythology.

Dryad : a nymph inhabiting a tree and keeping a watch over it.

Flora : Roman—originally Sabine—goddess of the spring and of flowers.

Provençal Song : the poetry of the troubadours, the court-poets of the twelfth century. Provence is the Roman 'Province' (Southern France).

South : Wine brewed in the sunny south of France.

Sunburnt mirth : transferred epithet (transferred from the people to their mirth).

Hippocrene : (Greek) 'the fountain of the steed' : the fount of the Muses, which was struck out of Mount Helicon by the hoof of the winged horse, Pegasus. Keats writes as if the spring ran wine.

26. The poet's brother John was perhaps in his mind here.

Bacchus : 'the ancient god of wine, was fabled to have driven a team of tigers or bynxes round the world.'

Pards : leopards, substituted by poetic license for tigers, or bynxes of the legend.

Fays : fairies.

Soft incense : scented blossoms.

Requiem : a hymn or mass sung for the repose of the soul of the dead.

Clown : peasant (apparently the original sense of the word).

Ruth : The woman from Moab whose husband died in her youth, and who consented to share with her mother-in-law Naomi in her husband's country her trials in the latter's loneliness. Ruth is a type of unflinching constancy. (Study the *book of Ruth* in Old Testament.)

Faery lands : strongly suggestive of the atmosphere of romance and chivalry. The last six lines of this stanza offer one of the finest examples of the pictorial element in Keats' poetry.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

Tennyson was born in 1809 and died full of honours and glory in a scene described as being full of poetic suggestions, in 1892. He was educated at Cambridge, where he won the Chancellor's Prize for writing a poem, *Timbuctoo*. By the time Tennyson entered his youth, most of the great poets of the early nineteenth century were either dead, or were silent. Keats, Shelley and Byron were all dead by 1824 and Coleridge and Scott were snatched away in 1834 and 1832. Of the great

poets only Wordsworth lived on up till 1850, but he wrote very little of what is remembered as great poetry after 1820. So, there was a period of what has been called the 'interregnum' in poetry round about 1832. In this situation the field was open for any new promising poet to capture it. Tennyson wrote some of his fine lyrics by 1830 or 1832. Of this period are *Mariana*, *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*, *The Poet*, *The Palace of Art*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, *A Dream of Fairy Women*, *Merlin*, *Lady of Shallott*, *Oenone*, and some others. The colour and sound of Tennyson's poems along with the flow and ease of their style, made Tennyson instantaneously popular. His contemporary, Browning, gifted with a much more powerful intellectual capacity, took long to catch up with Tennyson, chiefly because of what has been called the 'obscurity' of his verse. So in this period, between 1832 and 1842, Tennyson established himself as successor to Wordsworth and the poets of the Romantic Age.

As may be noticed from the study of the chronology of Tennyson's poetry, the best part of his work, that which has lived in the memories of men and which is included in all anthologies of English poetry, had been done by the year 1842. The best and profoundest portions of *In Memoriam*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Locksley Hall*, *Sir Galahad*, *Break, Break, Break*, *Ulysses* etc., had all been composed by that year. In the estimate of most critics Tennyson ceased poetically to 'grow' after this period. From that time on begins a period of stationary growth, in which only the earlier triumphs were repeated, the old felicities were re-created with perhaps subdued glory and a waning inspiration.

The cause for this situation, which it would not be wrong to call decline in his poetic power, well before the middle period of his life, is that in Tennyson's intellectual personality there was very little scope for any kind of growth. As has been pointed out by unbiased critics like Fausset, the intellectual reach of Tennyson, his philosophical or scientific power, was of a very limited quality. He had the gift of words and perhaps the finest felicity of phrase which any poet ever had. But he had no original thinking of any consequence. Where his theme is lyrical or descriptive, few poets can excel him. In the deepest portions of *In Memoriam*, in expression of agonizing doubt and in the aspiration of *Ulysses* we notice the highest lyrical gift, and so do we find in *Lotos Eaters*, *Lady of Shallott* and *The Palace of Art* a descriptive gift which since the days of Keats had not been met with. Had Tennyson but known the secret of his strength and the source of his weakness, and confined himself to lyrical and descriptive themes, perhaps the decline, noticeable in his poetry of the later period would not have occurred, and that reaction against him which came in the seventies of the Nineteenth Century and has continued in some measure ever since, would not have come about. But unfortunately, Tennyson took his

office of laureate, of what he thought himself to be, the voice of England and the teacher of his age, somewhat too seriously.

His poems especially from 1850 onwards, the year in which he was appointed laureate in place of Wordsworth who died in the same year, concern themselves chiefly with topics of the day, with political and social questions. There was an attitude of mind which has been called 'Victorianism'. This was a smug complacency which sought to justify the existing privileges of the upper classes, the hereditary aristocracy and the newly triumphant middle class by the enunciation of pseudo-scientific principles of doubtful application. This topical nature of Tennyson's themes was bound to militate against the reputation of his poetry, once the fashion of Victorianism was on the wane. Tennyson did no doubt come to be acknowledged the most representative figure of his age, the teacher and savant unto whom his contemporaries looked for the solution of their problems. But his philosophical poems express no eternal truth, give no vision of things of the spirit or the highest ideal. So, with the emergence of new thinking, modern social ideals and a more penetrating psychological and social analysis, the fashion for Tennyson and Victorianism passed away.

The reaction against Tennyson has by now given way, with the Victorian Age having receded into the distant background, to a more sober and impartial appreciation of the value of his poetic achievement. While his 'message' is considered now as dead and defunct, his lyrical and pictorial gifts are given the truly high estimation which is their due.

The following summing up by F. P. Lucas is fairly representative of the present-day view of Tennyson. After enumerating the various counts in the common charge against Tennyson, Lucas goes on to say :

"That is what the Devil's Advocate says now-a-days, when he has troubled to read Tennyson at all ; or even when he has not. And what is the answer ? The answer is, I think, that the Devil's evidence contains much truth ; but not the whole truth ; and in fact does not prove his case. Tennyson still remains a great poet, even though he may not have been a great thinker, nor a master of passion, nor of character, nor of long narrative. For he has other gifts, supreme gifts, of eye and ear and tongue. He is a great landscape-painter, and a great musician. He wrote many bad things, calculated to please his own age and now perished with it—so, for that matter, did Shakespeare. But he had style ; and style, though it may not at once win the day for a poet, can win him eternity. Tennyson is the poet of the perfect phrase. He could make moments immortal—a sudden gleam of sun, a gust of wind in the forest, the white breaking of a wave ; it is these that in

return will give him immortality. From the first humming of that lonely bee above the grave of Claribel to the last great tide in *Crossing the Bar* which goes sweeping back into the seaward gloom, there is hardly a sound or colour in Nature that he has not fixed in perfect words for ever. He can tell stories too, as in *The Revenge* or *Maeldune*; he can express, if not passion, at least a Virgilian majesty of sadness for the world, he can even at moments be passionate, as in those stanzas the first of which Meredith's wife, dying alone and broken-hearted, asked in vain to have carved upon her tomb :

Come not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head,

And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry :
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer ; being all unblest ;
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
And I desire to rest.

Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie :
Go by, go by.

"Yet his strength lies elsewhere. As in some Italian pictures ; so with his, the human figures, however lovely sometimes, are less perfect than the blue romantic wonder, the magic sadness of the beckoning world behind. The background crowns the work. Claribel is forgotten for the bee and the beetle that hum above her mossed headstone. Who was she ? We neither know nor care. It is not Mariana we remember, but the far lowing of the oxen in the fen, the drone of summer flies, the poplar shadow in the low moonlight, the cold winds of dawn about the Moated Grange. The heroine is indeed hardly more a human figure than is the bird in *The Dying Swan* : whose death, in its turn, is scarcely felt except as an occasion for calling up one of Tennyson's most living landscapes :

The plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

“In the same way Oenone’s is only a painted grief upon a painted mountain, and yet what painting ! Oenone herself is a true daughter of Tennyson ; she too seems almost sorrowless for her lost lover than for the mountain-pines he felled to fetch her rival from beyond the sea.

They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Froster’d the callow eaglet—Never, never more
Shall lone Oenone see the morning midst
Sweep thro’ them ; never see them overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

“Even the memory of her love calls up to her vision, not her lover’s lips, but yet another landscape—

kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

“So too the agony of Love and Duty, the misery of Tithonus both fade and pass like paling stars into the splendours of a Tennysonian dawn, before those steeds of morning that arise.

And shake the darkness from their loosened manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

“Tennyson indeed hears not so much men, as trees talking—“the dry-tongued laurels,” “pattering talk,” “the poplar’s noise of falling showers”, “the dawn wind in the sycamore,” “the chestnut pattering earth-ward through the faded leaves.” And he sees not only the trees, but every leaf upon them—the black ash-bud, the “million emeralds breaking from the ruby-budded line.” And again he can be vast as well as minute. No writer of our race, not even Swinburne, has so ruled the sea. If you ask whether this man was indeed a poet, make yourself an anthology of his seascapes alone. The Greeks fabled that Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, to be won must be held through a hundred changing shapes. That is what Tennyson has done as none before or since ; seizing alike its storm and calm, its wilder waves that smoke wind-whipped across the desolate North Sea, or “roar rock-thwarted, under bellowing caves” and again that quieter swell which goes groping blindly on dull days up its long sea-hall in the caverns of the cliff, or shines reflected glassy-white in the wet sand as it breaks or, breaking, thins out and out to nothing across

moon-marbled shore. As final examples, let suffice these two companion pictures of the Cornish sea; first, at the coming of Arthur, before the taint of Guinevere :—

There

All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,
He saw them—headland after headland flame
Far on into the rich heart of the west :
And in the light the white mermaiden swam,
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,
And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn ;
And then at *Arthur's Passing*, after the last battle with Modred
on the mist-bound western strand—

only the wan wave

Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

“It was fitting that Tennyson's poetry should close as it did, with that last tide, “too full for sound or foam,” which bore the old poet himself out into the darkness where no harbours are.

“When a man can do so much, is it not a little graceless to ask more ?” “Poetry”, said Matthew Arnold, “should be criticism of life,” it is the sort of thing critics say ; and no great harm comes of it, until Poets start believing them. Poetry may criticize life ; or it may simply paint it, “making”, in Sir Philip Sidney's phrase, “the much loved earth more lovely”. Who looks for problem-pictures from Raphael ? Tennyson wasted only too much of himself in “criticism of life” ; the gleam he followed was too often a wandering fire ; but “though much is taken, much abides.” There is no harm in laughing at the Victorians provided we laugh also at ourselves ; for if we do not, we shall, depend upon it, seem more ridiculous still to our own posterity. But after the laughter, there is room still more, for silent wonder at this master who, coming so late in our literature yet made such music, never heard before, and now surely to be heard through centuries, from the English country and the English tongue—

“Lord over the Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five.”

(From *Ten Victorian Poets*—F. L. Lucas.)

This is an extract from 'Maud' called a Monodrama, published in 1855. The background of this poem is the Crimean War of 1854-1857. The hero is a nervous man, who denounces the peaceful pursuits of commerce, and in a truly chauvinistic spirit, glorifies war. The hero who goes mad, somewhat like Hamlet, over disappointment in love, is healed by joining the Crimean War, in defence of hearth and home.

Maud is seldom read now as a continuous story, but it is interspersed with lovely allusions to natural beauty and with fine lyrics, of which the one selected here is the most famous.

The lover is a man whose father has been ruined by an act of cheating on the part of Maud's father whom he hates intensely, just as he hates her brother. But fate makes him love this man's daughter who is a passive girl, without much initiative, something like what Ophelia is in 'Hamlet'. There is a big dance, and the lover is waiting outside the Hall in the garden for Maud.

It is there that this lovely lyric, one of the most famous in Tennyson, is uttered. The two lovers are seen together by Maud's brother, a duel takes place and Maud's brother is killed. Maud dies of the grief. The situation thus has something of a parallel here with the Ophelia-Laertes-Hamlet situation. The lover goes mad, and a good part of the poem is a rendering of the ravings of the mad man. In the end, the need to fight for the country in the Crimean War works off his madness. This representation of war as a noble act which solves many ills is a 'message' to which the late generations have reacted very unfavourably.

"The story unfolds itself in a string of lyrics, each of them being a more or less independent poem, and each introducing a new moment in the situation with its special mood, which is embodied in the metre. The return of the metre reannounces the mood. Slow soft iambs, hectic anapaests, joyous trochees and many birdlike or dirgelike short measures, form in their succession an interwoven romance, a complete musical fabric, one extreme being seen in 'go not happy' and in the famous song of the rooks calling, the other in the long-breathed appeal, climbing and falling through a sentence of fourteen plangent lines, to the 'cold and clear-cut face.' A full study of the prosody of *Maud* considered as an index of emotion, might be the quickest way to the heart of the poem. The actual facts related, which are sometimes confusing, are cleared up by the notes, by no means superfluous, which the poet added.

"The speaker is a *decadent*, a kind of Hamlet without the brains, and Tennyson never dramatised any personage so clearly. The

language is that of an abnormal but actual man, and not the wonderfully patterned gauze of words that screens, the Lancelots and Arthurs off from us. In the end the narrator is cured, cured by the patriotic passion of war, and is made one with his kind. This no doubt, was the hardest corner for the poet, and also for his critics, to turn. As a matter of psychology the change is natural enough or at least is made to seem so. But it was here that the poet seemed to be speaking with his own voice. He does not, however, say though he was rated for saying, that war is good in itself and will cure every body. He does say that it may cure not only a hysterical youth but a stagnant nation. This idea was unpalatable to minds like that of Mr. Gladstone, with no enthusiasm for the passion of war. And the war was the Crimean War, which was going on. Even those who approved of it, hardly thought that it was a remedy for the evils declaimed at in the poem, of adulterated breed and slum violence. But this in consequence perhaps might go to the account of the speaker, not of the poet. Altogether, (*Maud*) was puzzling and was long and considerably disliked; its artistic qualities were obscured by the dust that it raised. It is really Tennyson's greatest and most genuine production of any length." (Oliver Elton).

the planet of love : Venus, which is with the evening (*Hesperus*) and the morning (*Phosphorus*) star.

Lord-lover : the unsuccessful rival.

26 and 27

The Lotos-Eaters and *Ulysses* are in a way companion-poems. Although not composed immediately one after the other, they yet present two directly contrasted attitudes towards life, and are opposed to each other in style and treatment no less than in their themes.

In these poems two different situations in the life of Ulysses or Odysseus as he was called, are treated for the expression of moral and psychological attitudes. In the *Odessey* is the story of the wanderings of Odysseus after the conclusion of the Trojan War for a number of years after losing his way on the sea. On one occasion, Odysseus is said to have come upon a strange land, the land of the Lotos-eaters. In the *Odessey* the account of this encounter is brief and devoid of ornate or luxuriant detail. There is just a mention of the land of the Lotos-eaters who eat a flowery food. Touching upon the experience of Odysseus and his companions of the place it is said: "Who ate the honey-sweet fruit of the Lotos had no desire to bring tidings to the ship or to come back to it but chose to dwell among the lotos-eating folk, and forgetful of returning, fed upon the lotos." This is the source of Tennyson's poem

of *Lotos-Eaters*, which is an expression in the form of narrative and a dramatically conceived chorus song of the mood of utter indolence, repugnance for effort and of 'dreamful.'

In *Ulysses*, Tennyson attempted an expression, also in a dramatically conceived situation, in the style of Browning's dramatic monologues, of the opposite mood of striving, inquiry, aspiration, and restless intellectual curiosity. The person through whom this latter attitude is expressed is the same Odysseus, whose crew gave utterance to the mood of weariness and indolence in the earlier poem. *Ulysses* is the noble expression of that eternal and everlasting element in man's nature, which in diverse times has characterized nations and individuals in their superhuman effort after knowledge and achievement. Such was the mood of Renaissance Italy and such also was the mood of Victorian England, with its unquenchable scientific enquiry and philosophical speculation, which sought to reduce all knowledge to a principle, to a system.

In *Lotos-Eaters* Tennyson has invented a landscape and scenery which in symbolising the inner feelings of the human beings thrown upon it is the finest example in literature of symbolical writing. In the land of the *Lotos-Eaters* it seemed always afternoon, and 'all round the coast the languid air did swoon!' The flow of the water in the stream even appears to be touched with the heavy, soporific effect of the languid fruit of the lotos, for the slender stream 'along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.'

In this atmosphere all desire for travel, for change, or any thought of aspiration is driven out of the minds of men. A perfect *rationale* of indolence and of static ease is invented by the sailors affected with this mood, in the manner of a Spenser or a Thomson. In stanza after stanza of the chorus song pictures are called up of the static vegetation, of objects of nature, of the

Music that gentler on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes
of the poppy hanging in sleep, of the rose opening out slowly on its stalk, of the apple, waxing over-mellow, dropping in a silent autumn night. No war with evil; no desire to return home, but only to muse of home and the past—a desire for rest, with no inclination for effort. 'Let what is broken so remain' is the culminating point in this reasoning for inglorious escape from effort. At the end comes the picture of the gods resting in celestial comfort and ease, indifferent to man's woe, on Mount Olympus. The example of these epicurean gods makes them resolve—

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil
the shore

Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
wave and oar,

O rest ye, brother mariners we will not wander
more.

The exuberance of richly coloured pictures, all fused into harmony of expressiveness of the mood of languidness, with the sinuous and perfect music of word and metre makes this poem one of the most ornate in the language. The interest of its artistry is inexhaustible with the Spenserian stanzas of the opening description, the short but stately metre of the choric song, ending in the long, wave-like flow of the Alexandrines at the close.

In *Ulysses* a great restraint in expression is discernible. The mood of aspiration and inquiry expresses itself in figures which have beauty, but not exuberance or luxuriance of the earlier piece. For suggestion of the infinite vistas for the imagination some of these lines are unparalleled :

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.

And

For my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars until I die.

The line 'To follow knowledge like a sinking star' is one of those miraculous utterances, the secret of which since the day of Marlowe few, if any, have been able to capture.

In this poem there is no minute, pre-Raphaelite description as in *Lotos-Eaters*, but the back-ground of the sea-shore of the falling evening and the preparation for embarking is not less vividly suggested in a few deft strokes.

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world'
strikes the key-note of the mood embodied in this poem as much as

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.
Beauties of sound and picture are not wanting in this Poem either.

In these lines is a perfect example of the sound echoing the sense :

'The long day wanes : the moon climbs ; the deep Moans round with many voices.

This poem is written in blank verse, which is skilfully varied in its pauses to give the impression of quiet, grave reflectiveness, in a mood of sobriety and purposeful determination.

Urn : A vessel used by the ancient Greeks and Romans and others to preserve the ashes of the dead.

Amaranth and moly : Legendary flowers which never fade.

Elysian : Of Elysium, paradise.

Asphodel : An immortal flower, said to cover the Elysian meads.

Hyades : A group of stars.

Happy Isles : The islands in Greeklore where the souls of the noble dead were said to rest.

Achilles : The great Greek hero of the Trojan War. Here there is an allusion to Tennyson's dear friend, Arthur Henry Hallam who died in 1833, and in mourning for whom he wrote over a period of seventeen years the great philosophical poem *In Memoriam*.

28

This is an extract from "Akbar's Dream", written by Tennyson when over eighty years of age. The poem is philosophic in thought. It is a hymn of adoration addressed to the sun, which here symbolises "the Timeless, the eternal God—the Alpha and Omega."

Tennyson can modulate his blank verse, which is his own creation, different both from the Elizabethan and from the Miltonic, to every theme, and elicit a music appropriate to each. In this poem he has attuned it to meditative thought.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812—89)

Browning, like Tennyson, is the other great poet of the Victorian Age. He was born in 1812 and died in 1889. He did not go to the university as his family was non-conformist, which fact in those times was enough to debar a man from getting admission to a university. His father had moderate means, but as

Browning was an only son, and his father wanted him to pursue a distinguished literary career, he was given every opportunity to acquire a vast and varied knowledge at home, and to travel abroad in his youth, for finishing up his education. Consequently Browning is one of the most learned among English Poets—what Milton and Gray had been before him. When he was 33, in 1842, there occurred a great event in his life—his elopement with Elizabeth Barrett and their marriage in Italy. This lady was a poet herself. Her father was a very strict man of old views, who could not brook that any of his children should marry. Consequently, his three daughters languished out their dreary lives at the home of their father. Browning fell in love first with the poetry of Elizabeth, and then with herself. He would visit her now and then and the touch of his personality helped her to regain her spirits and to recover from that invalid state to which she had been subject for a number of years now. In 1842 they decided to marry, which they did in Italy, away from the place where their conduct could have hurt her father. The married life of Robert and Elizabeth Browning is a unique episode in the history not only of English literature, but of conjugal relations. This was a couple who had perfect mutual understanding, whose love did not wane or show any decline. Browning has left some pieces, such as *One Word More*, *By the Fireside* and *Lyric Love* which express deeply and powerfully the love which he had for this woman who became his wife.

Browning presents many points of direct contrast with Tennyson. While Tennyson's genius is primarily lyrical, Browning's is dramatic. Not that Browning wrote any successful drama, but his poems are mostly speeches of different characters in situations of crisis, decision, suffering or emotional stress which are pregnant with that kind of upheaval of personality which is the basis of dramatic action. Consequently, the most characteristic works of Browning are his *Dramatic Monologues* and *Dramatic Lyrics*. Another point of contrast between the two poets is their respective power of original thinking. Tennyson represented the established opinions and views of his age, which find extremely ornate artistic expression in his verse. Browning was not an original thinker in the sense that he might have established any new school of thought or added to the volume of the knowledge of mankind in particular sphere. But he had natural fascination of new points of view, for the original approach to the problems of human life and conduct, for the analysis of the secret human motives, in the manner somewhat of the psycho-analysis of our day. This gives his poetry the note of intellectuality, lacking in that of Tennyson. In Tennyson's poetry there is the expression of faith but this faith is asserted somewhat haltingly and with evident effort at suppressing the ever assertive doubt. Browning's declaration of faith

is robust and almost aggressive, even a little demonstrative. The later generation found it impossible to share in the faith of either, but it is present as an essential element in each. The last point of contrast between the two poets is the equality of their expression. While Tennyson is as a rule ornate and clear, Browning is bare of precious ornament and most often obscure. Connoisseurs of artistry in verse have found Browning's verse hard, unmusical and even jaw-breaking, with grotesquery thrown in great abundance. To this is added his obscurity which springs in part from his vast learning in ancient and modern literatures and allusions to these which abound, and partly in his somewhat too cryptic expression, somewhat in the manner of the modern poets. Browning leaves out some steps in the thought-process, does not complete the logical structure of his verse and employs the method of implication as a habitual mode of technique.

While Browning's dramas, his longer poems and argumentative verse are not now read, the Dramatic pieces embodying splendid cameos of various types of human personalities, their motives, passion and vision, have found a permanent place in English literature by the side of all that is of supreme and first rate value in the poetry of the language.

29

This has been taken from Part I of "*The Ring and the Book*" the longest and one of the most characteristic of Browning's poems, published in 1868—9.

This lyric expresses the debt of deep gratitude which Browning owes and the inspiration given to him by his wife in his creative work as a poet. An equally noble tribute was paid by him to her in a longer poem, *One Word More*, while she was still living. In that poem he compares himself to Dante and Raphael—those two supreme artists of the world, who gave a unique and intensely personal expression to their love in an art different from the one which either of them habitually practised. Dante drew an Angel for the amusement of Beatrice while Raphael, the painter, wrote a book of sonnets to please his lady. Similarly, Browning, the writer of dramatic pieces which express thoughts of personalities other than his, wrote a lyric to give his love a unique expression, far removed from his habitual self as poet.

30

This poem was written within a few months of Mrs. Browning's death in 1816, and was first published in "*Dramatic Personal*" (1864). It is a tribute to her memory and may be taken as an intimate revelation of the poet's own creed. It is the most original

poem on death in English, and is a wonderful utterance of a brave soul expressing heroic contempt of death.

Browning's poems on Death are characterized by this confident faith in the future. There is in them no fear, no faltering of hope. Death is looked upon only as one stage in the continuous, eternal life of the soul, with an infinite future given by God's grace. The disappointed lover in *Evelyn Hope* is not deterred in his hope at the death of the girl whom he loved and who is now dead, nor is the benefactor of his country in *The Patriot*, who is being led out to his execution by an ungrateful nation.

Says Phelps in *Robert Browning—How to Know Him* on the mode of death preferred in this poem :—

“It is probable that thousands of worshippers who now devoutly pray to be delivered from sudden death, would really prefer that exit to any other. The reason is clear enough : it is to avoid the pain of slow dissolution, the sufferings of the death-bed, and the horrible fear of the dark. Now Browning boldly asks that he may be spared nothing of all these grim terrors. True to his conception of a poet, as a man who should understand all human experiences, he hopes that he may pass conscious and aware through the wonderful experience of dying. Most sick people become unconscious hours before death and slip over the line in total coma : Browning wants to stay awake.

I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.

I want to taste it all, the physical suffering, the fear of the abyss : I want to hear the raving of the fiened voices, to be in the very thick of the fight.

He adds the splendid line—

For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave.
Brave heart turns defeat into victory.”

The title : ‘Prospice’ is a Latin imperative meaning ‘Look forward’. The poet is sure of his victory over death and looks forward with joy to the happy reunion with his predeceased wife.

barriers fall : Admitting the combatants to the arena where the final battle must be fought.

Ferrara : Alphonso II D’ Este, Duke of Ferrara, was the chief patron of Tasso the poet.

This is one of the representative dramatic monologues of Browning. It shows Browning's comprehension of the varied aspects of human nature, and his analysis of character and motives. By making the Duke talk about his 'Last Duchess' in a dramatic manner, the poet offers us an insight into the Duke's character, his jealousy, greed or lust and also throws some light on the Duchess' nature, a noble soul, her gentle nature misunderstood by the sordid Duke.

This is one of the 'Renaissance' pieces in Browning's dramatic monologues. Browning was long resident in Italy, and had acquired an encyclopaedic knowledge of the social, artistic and psychological background of the period of the Renaissance in which there was such a vast resurgence of intellectual and aesthetic life in Italy. The Duke in this piece is a typical Prince of the sixteenth century. Italy of Machinavelli—unscrupulous, avaricious, sensual. Says Phelps, quoted earlier, on the superb skill with which this poem is constructed :—

"One of the greatest dramatic monologues in all literature is *My Last Duchess*, and it is astounding that so profound a life-drama should have been conceived and faultlessly expressed by so young a poet. The whole poem contains only fifty-six lines, but it could easily be expanded into a three-volume novel. Indeed it exhibits Browning's genius for condensation as impressively as *The Ring and the Book* proves his genius for expansion."

Fra Pandolf and Claus of Innsbruck : imaginary artists.

Nay will.....down, sir. "The Duke and the envoy prepare to descend the staircase : the latter bows, to give precedence to the man with the nine hundred years' old name : but the Duke, with a purr like a tiger, places his arm around the shoulder of the visitor, and takes the first step."

(Phelps' note)

Neptune : the god of the sea in classical mythology : here, bronze statue showing Neptune taming a sea-horse.

'Just then the master of the place calls attention casually to a group of statuary. It is Neptune taming a sea-horse. *That is the way I break them in !*' (Phelps)

MATTHEW ARNOLD

(1822—88)

Matthew Arnold has a permanent place in English literature through his critical work as much as through his poetry. His *Essays in Criticism, Culture and Anarchy* contain a discussion of and deep insight into the problems connected with

literature and with the social aspect of culture development, the like of which had not been displayed by any writer till then. As a critic Matthew Arnold is characterized by an insistence on the element of the intellect in writing, of order and a scheme, which in essence is the classical ideal. He reacts, against the shapelessness of much romantic writing which though it contains the purple patch is not conceived or constructed as a whole. For the example of such constructive quality in literature, Matthew Arnold refers his contemporaries to the literatures of two nations—one ancient and the other modern—the Greek and the French. Then again, for great poetry, he made the presence of the element, of 'high seriousness' or deep moral purpose an indispensable qualification. For this principle he has been severely criticized, as the insistence upon this principle would exclude much beautiful poetry of the world, which has pathos or passion, charm and colour and has satisfied men's urge for the beautiful, but does not contain any deep message.

Matthew Arnold's entire outlook and attitude is characterized by the thought-currents of the age in which he lived. The early Victorian age in England was an age of transition in ideas. The old world of settled beliefs and social ideals had been swept off by the upheaval of the French Revolution. A new set of acceptable and satisfying ideas had not yet emerged. So, Arnold was keenly conscious of living in an age of perplexity and uncertainty, of doubt and pessimism. As he himself expressed the situation, it was an age in which man was

Standing between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born.

This perplexity, intense questioning, doubt and pre-occupation with the problems of social and cultural ideals, therefore, characterizes the tone of Arnold's poetry. This poetry is intellectual, critical in the widest sense and possessed of *high seriousness* but it lacks passion. It has been accused, and rightly, of *being a little cold*.* Only such pieces of Matthew Arnold's as have plumbed the greatest depths of doubt and melancholy are of enough human universality as to be enshrined permanently in the affections of men. This melancholy and an elegiac note are habitually characteristic of Arnold's poetry.

It has been said truly of Dryden that his criticism is the criticism of a poet. It is no less true to say of Matthew Arnold that his poetry is the poetry of a critic. Even the ideal which he placed before the poet is, that poetry is or

*"He is like a starry night with a touch of frost, beautiful and chilly."

should be 'a criticism of life.' The sedulous pursuit of this ideal gives his own poetry almost a paralysis of action. But his poetry has perfect form, severe restraint and discipline. That is why he has succeeded wonderfully well in the sonnet of all forms of verse the one requiring exercise of severest restraint on the poet's expressiveness.

32

This sonnet was published in the first volume of Arnold's poems (1849) and is addressed to Shakespeare. This is one of the highest tributes ever paid to Shakespeare's genius. The sonnet is a comprehensive summing up of the artistic genius of Shakespeare. Phrases like :

.....Thou smilest and art still
Out-topping knowledge

and

All pains the immortal spirit must endure
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which low
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow
are the quintessential summary of those thousands upon thousands of volumes on the discussion and analysis of Shakespeare which we find in the work of Shakespearean scholars and critics. Arnold is uniformly good on catching the essential features of literature. His *Memorial Verses* on Wordsworth sum up the basic fact of Wordsworth's poetry in phrases like, healing power and

Thou laid us on the lap of the cool earth,
As we were in the moment of our birth.

This sonnet is Petrarchian in form—the form which was most widely prevalent in the great age of the sonnet—the sixteenth century. The sonnets of Matthew Arnold are some of the finest and most superbly finished in English.

33

This beautiful ode is profoundly melancholy in tone and expresses the peculiar turn of Arnold's mind, at once religious, sceptical, philosophical and emotional.

Metre—Lines 2, 3, 4, 5, accent subtly intermingled and exactly conveying the impression of waves advancing and retreating.

Matthew Arnold defined in one of his celebrated essay, *The Modern Element in Literature*, as modern that quality in an author which reflects and sums up the thought-tendencies of the period

and presents a comprehensive picture of the ideals which inspire the age in which it is produced. In this sense this beautiful poem is intensely *modern*. It expresses in a figure majestic and grand—the long, melancholy withdrawing roar of the sea—the doubt and lack of faith which characterized the nineteenth century. That melancholy which is noted to be characteristic of Arnold's poetry finds its most beautiful expression here.

Note the music of these lines :

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery.

And

But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long-withdrawing roar...

Sophocles : (495-406 B.C.) one of the three great Attic tragedians. Arnold greatly admired Sophocles as the poet "who saw life steadily and saw it whole" (Sonnet "To a Friend"), and it was not Sophocles that he modelled his own Greek drama of "Merope."

Darkling : In the dark.

ROBERT BRIDGES

(1844—1930)

Living a great old age, Bridges brought into the twentieth century the aroma of the nineteenth. He was the son of a Kentish squire. He was sent to school at Eton, whence went he to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He was educated for the medical profession at Bartholomew's Hospital in London. He was in active practice at that and other London hospitals till his retirement in 1882. Later he settled in Oxford where he lived a quiet and retired life. He was made Laureate in 1913, in succession to Austin. As Laureate he did not write much on the occasion of national importance and some called him the 'Dumb Laureate'.

Although a good part of the work of Bridges was published in the nineteenth century, such as *The Growth of Love* (1883) a series of sonnets in the Elizabethan model, and *Prometheus the Fire-Giver*. *Eros and Psyche* (1885) a play, *Nero* (1885), *Feast of Bacchus* (1880) besides a very large number of beautiful lyrics on love, nature and men, yet his greatest and abiding work, *The Testament of Beauty* was published only in 1929, a few months before his death. His work shows uniform taste, refinement and a scholarly sensitiveness towards language. He also wrote a number of critical essays of value, the most famous of which is

that on Keats, in which some aspects of Keats' poetry are studied with deep penetration.

As a poet Bridges is of the tradition of Tennyson and the pre-Raphaelites. One feels delight in Bridges' poetry less as something spontaneously created than as something beautifully and carefully wrought. Deep passion and rapture are lacking in his poetry as the poet in him is over-weighted by the rational and well-bred man of fine culture, who never used a word without comprehending its niceties of meaning. He has also a nostalgia for the older form of Poetry, whose aroma he can catch and reproduce with great felicity but the effect is that of experimentation, refinement and not of the spontaneous overflow of genius. When, however, he writes of little things of life like its beauty and haunting regrets, he is always exquisite.

In *The Victorians and After* Batho and Dabree have summed up the value of Bridges' contribution to English poetry in these words :

"Hardy was not a master of versification as Bridges was ; and indeed Bridges was a useful influence in bringing back a certain scholarly quality which it is necessary should occasionally be injected into English poetry as a call to order. To say that he was too much of a scholar to be a great poet—a common criticism—is of course, nonsense. Good scholarship never spoilt a good poet and Bridges, though a good poet, lacked the imaginative leap, the ability to transform experience, which makes a great poet. Yet his earlier work has a fine lyrical spring and Bridges can rank as a lyric poet somewhere in the neighbourhood of Arnold. Later a somewhat crabbed philosophy rusted the spring. His shorter poems show him at his best. There are, indeed, some good passages in the stanzaic narrative *Eros and Psyche*, and work of some magnificence in the sonnet sequence *The Growth of Love* : but it is in the shorter lyrics, where he could express an intense joy in the mere fact of existence, and the emotions of love, that he is most surely a poet. Besides, the prosodic complexity of such things as "*Whither O splendid ship,*" "*Awake my heart to be loved, awake, awake*" and the superb "*London snow*", contain delights which lovers of verse will always savour. His archaisms are irritating ; and his defence that they were not affections but grammatical necessities to him does not make them any less so.

"Bridges was not a very original poet ; he added little that was new to the tradition, but he very remarkably summed up in his work many strands of the tradition up to his own day, and carried the result forward through the breakdown in the nineties and the Edwardian period. He carried it, in fact, beyond the birth of a new formulation which itself went back to the old, but to different aspect of the old, reacting against "*Georgian Poetry*,

the final flicker of Victorian romanticism including pre-Raphaelite romanticism."

34

This poem was written in the Christmas of 1918, India's participation in the first Great War and the heroic achievement of her sons on the Western front aroused afresh the interest of English in her civilisation, and ultimate relation with the British Empire.

The poet-laureate foresees a time when, drawn together by love and each profiting by the civilisation of the other, India and England will proceed to perfect the reign of peace and love on earth.

In this poem as elsewhere in Bridges, quiet subdued tone of feeling may be seen combined with a happy and finely-sifted diction.

Man's home : this earth.

Thro' stress of ice and fire ; through the mutual conflicts of the elements, of heat and cold.

When God wished to create the world, out of chaos, He created the beautiful forms of this earth such as the rose and the lily.

Redeeming Chaos : cf. *Paradise Lost*, Book II, 959-967.

When straight behold the throne
Of Chaos and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful Deep with him enthroned
Sat sable vested Night, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign ; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon ; Rumour next and Chance,
And Tumult, and Confusion, all embrolled,
And Discord with thousand various mouths.

Craft divine : the skill of God, sometimes discoverable by man and sometimes wrapt in mystery.

Truth is a Beauty unconfined : Truth assumes as many forms each equally true as beauty does.

Grace : charm or beauty. Man's peculiar charm should be that he combines the beautiful points of all creation.

Native : born on the soil.

Palestine is the home of Christianity, and the modern cultures and civilisation of the West derive a large part of their inspiration from Christianity.

20-33. A prophecy of the future, when the doctrine of universal love will be subscribed to by the philosophers and thinkers of all nations of the world.

Magi : The three wise men who were led by a star to Christ at His birth.

Thou : India.

35

This poem is number seven of the third book of his *Shorter Poems*, published in 1890.

The Poem combines allegorical with natural description of landscape and coupled with the slow movement of the stanza reminds one of Spenser. Bridges is a revivalist, as much as he is original, he can catch the effects of a bygone poetic era and reproduce them in an entirely fresh and original style.

In this poem the poet has created the atmosphere of strangeness, almost a haunted loneliness, such as is the essence of one melancholy aspect of romance. The deserted town, all windowless, neglected and awry, and warping planks, is a ghost city of infinite melancholy. For parallels in point of this tone of atmosphere we shall have to go to the greatest of romantics, Coleridge, Keats and later, Tennyson.

The purity and simplicity of diction may again be noted.

hot decline : reference to the sultry afternoons of summer :
Read "Floating in the sun, past shallow islets."

loveliest came : loveliest hour of the day, when the mower is tired
of a long day's work.

straitened : narrow.

blind wall : compare the expression "a blind alley".

buried : in water.

Have you ever noticed this piling of the waters at the piers when the river is in flood ?

tender blades : the oars.

Shires : a region, a province, O E scir (What is the usual meaning of the word ?)

crowns : branches on the top.

pillars : compare 31 above.

dank : unpleasantly damp, soaked in water.

Note a piece of the wall fell into the water, so that the reflection of it in the smooth, slow stream below was not disturbed.

Coigns : projecting corners. (What does the phrase "coign of vantage" mean ?)

weedy shreds : shreds or pieces of weeds.

Mark the effect of sound in echoing the sense of this stanza.

RUPERT BROOKE

(1887—1915)

Rupert Brooke, educated at Rugby and Cambridge, joined the R. N. V. R. at the outbreak of the war in 1914, served at Antwerp, and died of blood poisoning from an insect bite at Skyros, on his way to the Dardanelles. His "*Poems*" (1911) and "*1914 and Other Poems*" (1915) express poignantly and vividly the joys, sorrows, and aspirations of youth.

The actual achievement of Rupert Brooke is, perhaps, not very considerable. But some of his poems reach such a level of perfection and show such a daring, novel manner of approach to poetical subjects as to make one deep regret his early end. Frank Swinnerton, in *The Georgian Literary Scene*, estimating the abiding achievement of Brooke in English literature, says very incisively, "Brooke was personally very popular. He was a handsome, gay boy, who was loved by all who knew him. He had been born in 1887, and had been educated at Rugby and Cambridge University. He had all the talent of a happy and charming boy, and that talent sang in his verses. It was not a powerful talent, and it is not likely to survive in the memory of later generations : but when Brooke died the shock to numbers of people who know him was shared by thousands who had never seen him. The thought that poets were dying for their country caused many to wish to read what these and other young poets, also soldiers, had to say of the great sacrifice and there was a tremendous consumption of new poetry, published at the time in quite innumerable little books. That it was partly a sentimental consumption I think is true : but the production and consumption were great enough to create the legend that poetry had been reborn in the War. At that time,

it must be remembered, all pathetically bellicose men of letters were prophesying a grand and glorious revival of splendour in our literature as the result of the purification of war.

"The essence of Brooke's poetry is force. His imagination is robust and penetrative, fearless in its contemplation of reality even down to some of its disgusting details. He is full of the youthful enthusiasm to experience the thrill of life, and some of it pulsates through his poetry. His attitude, his phrase and diction strike his trumpet note, and arouse our interest in work. His world stands out short and distinct, like the towers and pinnacles 'of a city under the light and blue of the sky.' Their world (of the mystics like Coleridge and Blake), old as Eden and remote as the stars, lies like the fabric of a vision; bathed in an unearthly atmosphere. He desired loved and praised things in themselves for their energy, vividness, and naturalness.....He is all activity and apprehensiveness."

The sonnets given here were written in 1914. Through them breathes a spirit of healthy fervent patriotism untinged by any sentimentality. The thought of death is never absent, but with Rupert Brooke death is no mere metaphysical mystery. It is a reality, the visible antithesis of life, its beauty and joy and hope, of its richness and variety of experience. Death has no terrors for him, not only because man is immortal, but because death is a form of sleep, a part of the liveableness of life. The realisation of its terrors would be a denial of a true zest in life, a shrinking back from exploring its possibilities to the bitter end.

The form of the sonnet is particularly suited to the genius of Brooke. He looks on several aspects of a question in several moods, or wishes to record a fleeting thought. In the lines of the sonnet he crystallizes them, terse and finally phrased. This renders the movement of the verses sometimes slow, and tends to make the lines to stand a little too much by themselves.

The noblest of these sonnets is the now famous *The Soldier*. This sonnet is not based on a mere conceit. The most perfect self-surrender alone can achieve the complete merging of one's self with the flowers and sunshine, the rivers, the dust, and the very air of one's country. There is the boldness of expression and reach of the highest poetry in these lines: "If I am dead, think only this of me, there's some corner of a foreign field that is for ever England."

PEACE

there : in the war.

SAFETY

The security that lies within ourselves.

Tears of men and mirth : that is, of men in joy and sorrow.

Times throwing : compare Shakespeare's Sonnet I, XIV :

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age ;
When sometimes lofty towers I see down-raised
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage :
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main
Increasing store with loss and loss with store :
Ruin that taught thus to ruminare,
That time will come and take my love away.

THE DEAD

6. *Gone proudly friended* : In a letter from the South Sea the poet wrote : "There is nothing in the world like friendship. And there is no man who has had such friends as I, so many, so fine, so various, so multiform, so prone to laughter, so strong in affection, and so permanent, so trustworthy, so courteous, so stern with vices, and so blind to faults or folly, of such swiftness of mind and strength of body, so apt both to make jokes and to understand them. Also their faces are beautiful, and I love them. I repeat a long list of their names every night before I sleep. Friendship is always exciting, and yet always safe, There is no lust in it, and therefore no poison. It is cleaner than love, and older : for children and very old people have friends but they do not love. It gives more and takes less, it is fine in the enjoying and without pain when absent ; it leaves only good memories. In love all laughter ends with an ache, but laughter is the very garland on the head of friendship. I will not love and I will not be loved. But I will have friends round me continually all the days of my life, and in whatever land I may be. So we shall laugh and eat and sing, and go great journeys in boats and on foot, and write plays and perform them and pass innumerable laws taking their money from the rich. I err. I praise so extravagantly conveying an impression that friendship always gives peace. And even at the moment I feel a hunger, too rending for complete peace, to see all your faces again, and to eat food with you.

And after : and afterwards there comes frost.

THE SOLDIER

Note how completely the poet identifies himself with his country and also the proud patriotism of an English soldier, and the beauty of its expression.

all evil shed away : when all evil is shed away.

ONE DAY

This sonnet is dated, "The pacific, October 1912". It is the expression of a joyous mood, when the poet's imagination plays with the light dancing on the spray, the tiny clouds in sky, and foam tossing in the waves. Lyric moods of complete abandon to one sentiment are rare in Brooke.

Stray buds : bright and cheerful associations born of the big experience of the past.

Were fire : were set on fire, burnt down.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

(1884—1915)

Fletcher's was a romantic vision, and it was the Orient, even before he went to the East, which coloured every imagining from which his verse-making inspiration sprang.

He was born in London in 1884, the son of a schoolmaster, and he fulfilled the dream of many a Londoner by attending the universities both of Oxford and Cambridge. He then entered the consular service, and went as a representative of Great Britain to Constantinople, Smyrna, and Beyrout. He contracted tuberculosis, and the last years of his life (full of ferocious work as they were) had to be spent in what proved to be fruitless journeys to different Swiss resorts in pursuit of a cure. He was at all times, from youth onwards, a joyous and indefatigable talker, was no dreamer but one who had a thousand opinions upon the proper government of the world and the education best suited to the production of wise men, and from excessive readiness as a boy to versify upon every subject he gradually developed into a poet who united great self-discipline with a well-considered exoticism.

This exoticism was instinctive, but it was greatly enriched by his stay in the East, where he saw and tasted all those marvels of colour and strangeness which had been his mental feast from boyhood. From the East came his poetic drama, *Hassan*, which was produced in London after his death, with great success. From

the East, too, came his most mature work, such as *The Golden Journey to Samarkand*, in which the zest and freedom of his personality were in full play.

What shall we tell you ? Tales, marvellous tales
Of ships and stars and isles where good men rest
Where never more the rose of sunset pales.
And winds and shadows fall towards the West.

It was not in his power to use his poetry as an instrument of criticism or for the portrayal of English urban Life, for his aim was beauty alone ; but he could and did make what he wrote both shapely and thrillingly full of himself. The brilliance of his skill with words does not always cover the limitation of his interest, the poetry is never excessive in its ambition, but what Flecker knew and felt he could tell in such a way that he sang it separately to every reader.

Such a combination of passion and coldness as he displays is very rare indeed in English poetry ; less rare, perhaps, in those very Parnassians to whom he gave his praise. But rare in any language. And in the same way such a union of colour and directness is so uncommon that if there were no other gift it would distinguish Flecker's work from that of his contemporaries. They had their virtues, of greater passions than his or of greater coldness, but they had not Flecker's magic. Furthermore, the older he grew the more he became a master of his mind and his poetic instrument, so that in his case regret for the untimely loss of a talent is heightened by a sense of what he might have done if he had lived. He could either have contributed to our day in untroubled beauty which it lacks, or have lent strengthening aid to those 'moderns' who in reaction from sentiment and copiousness are threatened with drouth. For himself, addressing *A Poet A Thousand Years Hence*, he begged modestly only to be read.

O friend unseen, unborn, unknown,
Student of our sweet English tongue,
Read out **my** words at night, alone :
I was a poet, I was young.

(Swinerton in the *Georgian Literary Scene*).

37

Metre : Founded on a Persian metre. The swift anapaests and triple rhymes convey the irresistible gallop of conquering horsemen : and this sense is assisted by the sounding names of places far apart but brought within the compass of a single expedition.

Kings of the Sunset : Kings of Western Europe.

- Samet** : Samite. "rich medieval dress-fabric of silk sometimes interwoven with gold." (C. O. D.)
- Merov** : Merv.
- Balghar** : Bulghar the ancient capital of the Turco-tartar Bulgar.
- Rum** : Roum, the Saracen name for the Eastern Empire and for its capital Constantinople.
- The plain** : The plain by the Guadalete (near Medina Sidonia) where the Muslim army of 12,000 under Tariq beat Roderic the Goth and his 100,000 men in Sept. A. 711.
- Jalula** : strong fortress of the Persians, almost due N. of Baghdad. It was captured by the Muslims in 637 with great spoil and multitudes of prisoners.
- Broker** : merchant, agent.
- Rock of Stamboul** : the granite column of Constantinople which commemorates the victory of Claudius over the Goths at Nissa in 299, and which the Muslim invaders must certainly have seen (Gibbon, ch. xi).

SAROJINI NAIDU

(1879—1949)

Sarojini Naidu was born at Hyderabad (Deccan) in 1878. She passed through a period of study in India and England. Since 1920 she had been in the front rank of India's fight for freedom and was the first woman President of the Indian National Congress. On the attainment of freedom in 1947 she was appointed Governor of the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh). She passed away in 1949.

Her poems are characterized by the charm and beauty of the colourful East, and by the charming melody. There is a romantic atmosphere about all that she writes, and conveys to the reader the vision of a lovely, colourful world.

Sir Edmond Gosse persuaded her to tear up her poems about English life and to write of her Indian bazars and cities, villages, and festivals, and for this persuasion we should indeed be grateful to Sir Edmond.

She has depicted 'the festivals and faiths, the customs and tradition', the flowers and bazars and dancers, the palanquin-bearers and bangle-sellers; all in a melifluous, ornate style.

AUROBINDO GHOSE

(1872—1950)

He received his early and higher education in England, returning to India in 1893 after getting a Tripos a Cambridge. For thirteen years he worked as Professor at Baroda. The rising tide of the national movement in the hectic period of the Bengal partition agitation drew him into its vortex and he suffered imprisonment for one year for participation in terroristic activities. After release in 1910 he retired to the French Indian settlement of Pondicherry, where he has since lived the life of a recluse, engaged in the contemplation of mystical and spiritual life.

He has gained great fame as a yogi, a mystic. Self-realization is his ideal, and those who have the passion for the life divine, resort to his famous Ashrama in pursuit of the ideal existence.

His poetry has the touch of the genuine mystical expression—rare individual emotionalised experience, with startling imagery to convey a glimmer of this experience. The impression which one gets from reading him is that of being drunk with the wine of the spirit. There is an ecstasy in it which exalts the spirit with its own elevation.

40

This poem belongs to the pre-Pondicherry days. It is characterised by an unbroken intensity of emotion and richness of music. The Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice has been almost transformed into a magic tale of love and death and immortality. The setting as well as the sentiment and language are typically Hindu. The poet has succeeded in making an epic story in the manner of Sanskrit tellers of tales, with the background of Puranic love and atmosphere. The adventure of Ruru in the land of Yama, besides reminding of the story of the Greek Orpheus, recalls also the story of Savitri, that immortal figure in the annals of conjugal faith and love, who through her devotion won back her husband Satyavan from the Kingdom of Death. The exuberance of description and wealth of rich precious detail is particularly noticeable. There is great mastery of poetic phrase and rare, and apt epithet much in evidence on the occasions calling for high imaginative expression. In places the grandeur of the description is almost Miltonic in its vastness. The blank verse has a flow and maturity which bespeaks great mastery of his medium by the poet.

Ruru and Priyamvada are imaginary persons.

Uswuth : Ashwatha. (The sacred peepal tree figuring often in Hindu mythology).

Hutashan : Another name for Agni, the god of Fire.

Kama }
Madan } : God of Love.

Rathi : (Rati) Kama's beloved.

Chompuk : (champak) a flower-bearing Indian tree. This word occurs also in Shelley (*The Indian Serenade*).

Bhrigu : A famous *rishi* or Saint.

Saraswathi : goddess of learning and the arts.

Shatudru

Bipasha

Chandrabhaga

Bitosta

} Serially, the Sutlej, Beas, Chenab and Jhelum
—rivers celebrated in Vedic and ancient
Hindu literature.

Patala : the nether world.

Critanta : God of Death (Kritanta).

Tuxuc, Vasuki, Carcotaca : Names of legendary serpents.

Apsara : A nymph.

Boitorini : Vaitarini, the river of hell, which only the righteous can cross.

SIDNEY KEYES

(1922—1943)

Sidney Keyes was born on May 17th, 1922. In October 1940, he went as a history scholar to Queen's College, Oxford and became editor of the famous undergraduate magazine, *The Cherwell*. In 1942 he joined the army and was sent to Tunisia. He was taken prisoner during the last days of the campaign and died from unknown causes on April 29th, 1943 while in enemy hand.

Michael Meyer has thus assessed the possibilities of this youthful poet who died prematurely at the age of twenty-one : " Fear and guilt ruled him from the first. In the ordinary course of events he would have been an esoteric poet, a haunted country-man like John Clare. In one of his letters, Keyes quoted Rilke's belief that death is a child we carry with us, waiting to be born and that when the inevitable moment of its victory arrives the test of our victory is measured by the courage of our submission. This is a poetic statement of the faith of the soldier. Certainly in Africa, Keyes found a serenity which had never been his in England : a peace paradoxically arising from actual violence.

"If he had survived, where would he have gone from there ? I doubt whether external experiences could have yielded him any more fruit. He would have crossed into the uncharted

country of inward experience, and become a mystic. He was highly sensitive to supernatural influences.....If he had no sense of the supernatural, he would have been a nature poet of the school of Crabbe and Clare and Edward Thomas all of whom he reversed. The combination of these two gifts would, I believe, have made him a poet of the highest stature. For it is the possession of both these qualities, outward and inward perception, that distinguishes the great from the minor poet. And his technical skill was equal to his requirements. He assessed instinctively the conjuring power of words, some of his poems seem to echo from across the centuries. He was not yet twenty-one when he died, and presumably would not have reached the height of his power for another five to seven years. He had scarcely begun to write."

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Prospero is the hero of Shakespeare's play *Tempest*. He was Duke of Milan, but had been driven out of his Dukedom. He had a beautiful daughter, Miranda. He had supernatural powers of magic, and had control over the wind and waves and over spirits.

Yarn : To talk for long. A *yarn* is a long tale.

Mandrake : A plant the root of which resembles the human shape. This plant was supposed to have supernatural properties and to shriek when uprooted.

Ariel : An airy spirit obedient to Prospero.

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